

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

CHRISTMAS NUMBER 1950



THE THAMES OFF GREENWICH.

BY GEORGE CHAMBERS.



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Cover picture in colour, "THE THAMES OFF GREENWICH," by George Chambers.

PAGES IN COLOUR

"THE RELUCTANT PET," by Jan Van Noordt.

The initial page and frontispiece of the famous love gift, "LA GUIRLANDE DE JULIE," a French Florilegium, 1641, produced in honour of Mlle. Julie d'Angennes de Rambouillet by her fiancé, Baron de Sainte-Maure, afterwards Duc de Montausier.

PICTURES MADE WITHOUT PAINT, remarkable life-like miniatures of Mice and Birds made entirely from grasses and seeds.

"PAINTINGS" IN SCALES OF BUTTERFLY WINGS without any other pigment, and (in black and white) illustrations of the method used by the Artist employing this remarkable medium.

"BLIND MAN'S BUFF," attributed to Hubert Robert.

"THE DOG'S EDUCATION," by François Boucher, an example of the Artist's pastoral or rustic manner.

"AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COQUETTE," a period drawing in the style of François Boucher.

"COTTAGES BESIDE A RIVER," by François Boucher, one of the rare landscapes by this Artist.

Domestic Life in Seventeenth-Century Holland : "A PRESENT FOR A GOOD GIRL," by Jacob Ochtervelt.

Domestic Life in Eighteenth-Century England : "A VISIT TO GRANDMOTHER," by John Zoffany.

"THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERANCE" : double-page reproduction of a masterpiece of Dutch Art by Jan Steen.

"THE CHILDREN'S TOYS GIVE THEIR OWN CHRISTMAS PARTY," paintings specially made for *The Illustrated London News* by Martin Battersby, with a descriptive story written by the Artist.

Science Without Tears in the Eighteenth Century : "AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE AIR PUMP" and "THE ORRERY," by Joseph Wright of Derby.

"THE NATIVITY," by Federico Barocci.

"BEAUTIES OF THE LATE GEORGIAN ERA," a quartette of engravings in colour after drawings by John Downman.

"A LITTLE INSTRUCTION FROM AUNTIE," a water-colour drawing by John Downman.

DECORATIVE PAINTINGS BY EUGENE KASSESSINOFF, Court Painter to H.M. the King of Egypt.

PAGES IN MONOTONE

"THE DONKEY RIDE," by Thomas Gainsborough.

Four pages of illustration by Robert Lawson from the famous story "FERDINAND THE BULL" by Munro Leaf, published for the first time after 1938.

"THE SEVEN CROSSES" by GEORGES SIMENON

A Complete Short Novel specially written for "The Illustrated London News"

The setting of this crime novel is in Paris on a Christmas Eve



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THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

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THE RELUCTANT PET
"A GIRL WITH A PIGEON"; By JAN VAN NOORDT
REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF EDWARD SPEELMAN



A LOVE-GIFT OF LONG AGO FROM A FRENCH DUKE TO HIS FIANCÉE: THE FRONTISPIECE
OF "LA GUIRLANDE DE JULIE" — ZEPHYR SCATTERING FLOWERS.

Although Julie d'Angennes de Rambouillet and the Baron de Sainte-Maure, her fiancé, who afterwards became Duc de Montausier, have been dead these many years, the romance of their courtship and the greatness of his love are enshrined for all time in one of the most enchanting tributes ever paid by a wooer to his lady. This is the famous French Florilegium, known as the "*chef d'œuvre de la galanterie*," commissioned by the Baron de Sainte-Maure in honour of Mlle. Julie d'Angennes de Rambouillet and presented to her before he left for the wars in 1641. It is known as "*La Guirlande de Julie*," and consists of a book of

98 leaves, with 29 paintings of flowers by Nicolas Robert (1614-85), the famous flower-painter, and 62 poems, each inspired by a flower, written by Corneille, Montausier himself and poets and wits of the period who frequented the salon of Mme. de Rambouillet, mother of Julie. The verses were inscribed by Nicolas Jarry (1620-c.1674), the most celebrated calligrapher of the day. The title-page, which we reproduce opposite, consists of a garland of the flowers illustrated, and chosen as the subjects for the verses in honour of Julie. Though some of Nicolas Robert's later work may be more brilliant and spectacular, and more

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Owner, a private collector in France.

[Continued opposite.]



A LOVE-GIFT OF LONG AGO FROM A FRENCH DUKE TO HIS FIANCÉE: THE TITLE-PAGE OF THE FLORILEGIUM IN HONOUR OF JULIE D'ANGENNES DE RAMBOUILLET.

Continued. accurate botanically, he never produced anything more charming than this book. The verses, to quote a contemporary authority, "though inspired by love, were only moderately so by Apollo," but some of them have considerable stylised charm and elegance. The following verse on the Iris is one of the sixteen composed by the lover himself: "*Parmy toutes ces autres fleurs Recevez cette Flambe O Julie adorable, C'est le vivant portrait des mortelles douleurs Que cause dans mon sein une playe incurable Pour vous montrer l'estat de mon cœur consumé Je ne pouvais choisir qu'un objet enflammé.*" Our reproductions of the frontispiece and the title-page

were made from the original book which was presented to Julie. It was shown by the courtesy of the present owner, a private collector in France, at the Exhibition of Flower Books and their Illustrators arranged by Wilfred Blunt for the National Book League last spring in London, this being the first occasion on which it had been seen in this country. Jarry made three versions of the text in 1641—a quarto volume, unillustrated; the original copy owned by the Duchess of Montausier, and an octavo volume, unillustrated, bound similarly to the folio copy and presented to Julie at the same time.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Owner, a private collector in France.

PICTURES WITHOUT PAINT:

MICE AND BIRDS MADE ENTIRELY FROM SEEDS, MOSS, THORNS, BARK AND TWIGS.



MADE TO SCALE FROM HEDGEROW GLEANINGS: A DOTTEREL, WHICH IS ONE OF THE EASIEST BIRDS TO STUDY ON ACCOUNT OF ITS ALMOST ABSURD TAMENESS.



BROUGHT TO LIFE BY A CRAFTSMAN: A STUDY OF WOOD MICE IN THEIR NATURAL SETTING, MADE ENTIRELY FROM SUCH MATERIALS AS SYCAMORE AND COW PARSLEY SEEDS, CARVED THORNS, THISTLEDOWN, MOSS, GRASS AND TWIGS.



MODELLED WITHOUT THE USE OF A SINGLE FEATHER: A SPARROW AND A ROBIN IN A WINTRY SETTING. EVERY SPECIES OF BIRD HAS A BEAK MADE FROM A DIFFERENT TYPE OF THORN.

Once upon a time, as even a true story can start, a man who was then living in the wilds of Australia looked around him for some way of amusing his six-year-old daughter. He saw possibilities in a furry seed and made it into a mouse, which he put in a match-box. That was twenty-two years ago, and to-day Squadron Leader H. E. Hervey, M.C. (retired), formerly a trainer of glider pilots, devotes his time to making scale miniatures of birds and animals. Many people have done this before, but not in the way that Squadron Leader Hervey has now perfected. The amazing thing about his miniatures, four of which are reproduced on this page actual size, are the materials from which they are made, and the perfection of detail which he attains. He says that "almost every part of an animal's anatomy can be matched by a seed," and his equipment consists of a pair of tweezers, a variety of hedgerow gleanings which can be found on any country walk, and a collection of seeds, some of which are sent to him from Australia and South America. The materials used in the animals and birds shown on this page include sycamore, hollyhock, cow parsley, mustard and lettuce seeds; thistledown, thorns—each one carved and shaped to suit



MADE ALMOST ENTIRELY FROM SEEDS: THESE HARVEST MICE, WHICH MAKE AN INTERESTING COMPARISON WITH THE WOOD MICE ABOVE, ARE THE WORK OF A MAN WHO HAS BEEN PERFECTING HIS CRAFT FOR TWENTY-TWO YEARS.

the particular species of bird—moss, bark and twigs. Cow parsley and cress-seeds are used for the beaks of some of the birds; the flat seeds used for the ears of the mice are first split (one seed making a pair of ears) then damped and moulded to shape. Everything that Squadron Leader Hervey uses is treated with a special solution to harden and preserve it. Bark has to be boiled to get rid of lurking grubs, and moss coloured so that it doesn't fade. To date Squadron Leader Hervey has made more than twenty different animals and over seventy species of birds, and he has so far escaped imitators as his craft necessitates endless patience, wonderful dexterity and a wide knowledge of animals and bird life. He mounts his finished pictures in plain wooden frames or sets them in the lids of boxes. Squadron Leader Hervey received the unusual honour this year of being asked to submit two of his pictures to the Society of Miniaturists. An exhibition of his work, which was visited by Queen Mary and the Duchess of Gloucester, was held earlier this year at the Medici Galleries, in Grafton Street, where examples of his work are always on view. The miniatures have proved a great source of attraction to children.



"THE DONKEY RIDE", BY THOMAS GAINSBOROUGH, R.A. (1727-1788)

The grace and spontaneity of this monochrome painting by Thomas Gainsborough render it a particularly attractive work of the great eighteenth-century master of landscape painting and portraiture. The cottage children are depicted in homely ragged attire, while the donkey, who serves as a mount for the younger girl, is a very docile, shaggy beast, obviously used to carrying much more utilitarian burdens on his patient back. Although many people think of Thomas Gainsborough chiefly

as the Court painter, whose sitters were Royal personages and great ladies, he perhaps reached the highest point of his art when painting the English landscape which he loved so well, and the rustic boys and girls among whom his childhood and youth were spent in Suffolk. We reproduce this painting by courtesy of the owner, Colonel Ralph Clarke, M.P. It is traditionally said to be the study for the painting destroyed by fire at Clumber. It was exhibited at Guildhall in 1902.



THE SEVEN CROSSES

By GEORGES SIMENON,

Author of "The Maigret Series," "The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By," "Poisoned Relations," etc.

Translated by GEOFFREY SAINSBURY. Illustration by STEVEN SPURRIER, A.R.A.

I
AT home we always used to go to Midnight Mass. I can't remember a Christmas when we missed it, though it meant a good half-hour's drive from the farm to the village. . . ."

The speaker, Sommer, was making some coffee on a little electric stove.

"There were five of us," he went on. "Five boys, that is. . . . The winters were colder in those days. Sometimes we had to go by sledge. . . ."

Lecœur, on the switchboard, had taken off his earphones to listen to the conversation.

"In what part of country was that?"

"Lorraine."

"The winters in Lorraine were no colder thirty or forty years ago than they are now, only, of course, in those days the peasants had no cars. How many times did you go to Midnight Mass by sledge?"

"Couldn't say, exactly. . . ."

"Three times? Twice? Perhaps no more than once. Only, it made a great impression on you, as you were a child."

"Anyhow, when we got back, we'd all have black-pudding, and I'm not exaggerating when I tell you I've never had anything like it since. I don't know what my mother used to put in them, but her *boudins* were quite different from anyone else's. My wife's tried, but it wasn't the same thing, though she had the exact recipe from my eldest sister—at least, my sister swore it was. . . ."

He walked over to one of the huge, uncurtained windows, through which was nothing but blackness, and scratched the pane with a finger-nail.

"Hallo! There's frost forming. That again reminds me of when I was little. The water used to freeze in our rooms and we'd have to break the ice in the morning when we wanted to wash. . . ."

"People didn't have central heating in those days," answered Lecœur coolly.

There were three of them on night duty. *Les nuiteux*, they were called. They had been in that vast room since eleven o'clock, and now, at six on that Christmas morning, all three were looking a bit jaded. Three or four empty bottles were lying about, with the remains of the sandwiches they had brought with them.

A lamp no bigger than a tabloid lit up on one of the walls. Its position told Lecœur at once where the call came from.

"13th *arrondissement*, Croulebarbe," he murmured, replacing his earphones.

He seized a plug and pushed it into a hole.

"Croulebarbe? . . . Your car's been called out—what for?"

"A call from the Boulevard Masséna. . . . Two drunks having a fight."

Lecœur carefully made a little cross in one of the columns of his notebook.

"How are you getting on down your way?"

"There are only four of us here. Two are playing dominoes. . . ."

"Had any *boudin* to-night?"

"No. Why?"

"Never mind. I must ring off now. . . . There's a call from the 16th."

A gigantic map of Paris was drawn on the wall in front of him, and on it each police station was represented by a little lamp. As soon as anything happened anywhere, a lamp would light up and Lecœur would plug in to the appropriate socket.

"Chaillot? . . . Hallo! . . . Your car's out? . . ."

In front of each police station throughout the twenty *arrondissements* of Paris one or more cars stood waiting, ready to dash off the moment an alarm was raised.

"What with?"

"Veronal."

That would be a woman. It was the third suicide that night, the second in the smart district of Passy.

Another little cross was entered in the appropriate column of Lecœur's notebook. Mambret, the third member of the watch, was sitting at a desk filling up forms.

"Hallo! Odéon? What's going on? . . . Oh, a car stolen. . . ."

That was for Mambret, who took down the particulars, then 'phoned them through to Piedbœuf in the room above. Piedbœuf, the teleprinter operator, had such a resounding voice that the others could hear it through the ceiling. This was the forty-eighth car whose details he had circulated that night.

An ordinary night, in fact—for them. Not so for the world outside. For this was the great night, *la nuit de Noël*. Not only was there the Midnight Mass, but all the theatres and cinemas were crammed, and at the big stores, which stayed open till twelve, a crowd of people jostled each other in a last-minute scramble to finish off their Christmas shopping.

Indoors were family gatherings feasting on roast turkey and perhaps also on *boudins* made, like the ones Sommer had been talking about, from a secret recipe handed down from mother to daughter.

There were children sleeping restlessly while their parents crept about, playing the part of Santa Claus, arranging the presents they would find on waking.

At the restaurants and cabarets every table had been booked at least a week in advance. In the Salvation Army barge on the Seine tramps and paupers queued up for an extra special.

Sommer had a wife and five children. Piedbœuf, the teleprinter operator upstairs, was a father of one week's standing.

Without the frost on the window-panes they wouldn't have known it was freezing outside. In that vast, dingy room they were in a world apart, surrounded on all sides by the empty offices of the *Préfecture de Police*, which stood facing the *Palais de Justice*. It wasn't till the following day that those offices would once again be teeming with people in search of passport visas, driving licences and permits of every description.

In the courtyard below, cars stood waiting for emergency calls, the men of the flying squad dozing on the seats.

Nothing, however, had happened that night of sufficient importance to justify their being called out. You could see that from the little crosses in Lecœur's notebook. He didn't bother to count them, but he could tell at a glance that there were something like zoo in the drunks' column.

No doubt there'd have been a lot more if it hadn't been that this was a night for indulgence. In most cases the police were able to persuade those who had had too much to go home and keep out of trouble. Those arrested were the ones in whom drink raised the devil, those who smashed windows or molested other people.

Two hundred of that sort—a handful of women among them—were now out of harm's way, sleeping heavily on the wooden benches in the lock-ups.

There'd been five knifings. Two near the Porte d'Italie. Three in the remoter part of Montmartre, not in the Montmartre of the Moulin Rouge and the Lapin Agile, but in the Zone, beyond where the *Fortifs*

used to be, whose population included over 100,000 Arabs, living in huts made of old packing-cases and roofing-felt.

A few children lost in the exodus from the churches. But they were soon returned to their anxious parents.

"Hallo! Chaillot? How's your veronal case getting on?"

She wasn't dead. Of course not! Few went as far as that. Suicide is all very well as a gesture. Indeed, it can be a very effective one. But there's no need to go and kill yourself!

"Talking of *boudin*," said Mambret, who was smoking an enormous meerscham pipe, "that reminds me of..."

They were never to know what he was reminded of. There were steps in the corridor, then the handle of the door was turned. All three looked round at once, wondering who could be coming to see them at ten past six in the morning.

"*Salut!*" said the man who entered, throwing his hat down on a chair.

"Whatever brings you here, Janvier?"

It was a detective of the *Brigade des Homicides*, who walked straight over to the stove to warm his hands.

"I got pretty bored sitting all by myself, and I thought I might as well come over here. After all, if the killer's going to do his stuff, I'd hear about it quicker here than anywhere."

He, too, had been on duty all night, but round the corner, in the *Police Judiciaire*.

"You don't mind, do you?" he asked, picking up the coffee-pot. "There's a bitter wind blowing."

It had made his ears red.

"I don't suppose we shall hear till eight, probably later," said Lecœur.

For the last fifteen years he had spent his nights in that room, sitting at the switchboard, keeping an eye on the big map with the little lamps. He knew half of the police in Paris by name, or, at any rate, those who did night duty. Of many he knew even their private affairs, as, when things were quiet, he would have long chats with them over the telephone to pass the time away.

"Oh, it's you, Dumas. . . . How are things at home?"

But though there were many whose voices were familiar, there were hardly any of them he knew by sight.

Nor was his acquaintance confined to the police. He was on equally familiar terms with many of the hospitals.

"Hallo! . . . Bichat? . . . What about the chap who was brought in half an hour ago? . . . Is he dead yet? . . ."

He was dead, and another little cross went into the notebook. The latter was, in its unpretentious way, quite a mine of information. If you asked Lecœur how many murders in the last twelve months had been done for the sake of money, he'd give the answer in a moment—sixty-seven.

"How many murders committed by foreigners?"

"Forty-two."

You could go on like that for hours without being able to bowl him out. And yet he trotted out his figures without a trace of swank. It was his hobby: that was all.

For he wasn't obliged to make those crosses. It was his own idea. Like the chats over the telephone lines, they helped to pass the time away, and the result gave him much the same satisfaction that others derive from a collection of stamps.

He was unmarried. Few knew where he lived or what sort of a life he led outside that room. It was difficult to picture him anywhere else, even to think of him walking along the street like an ordinary person. He turned to Janvier to say:

"For your cases, we generally have to wait till people are up and about. It's when a *concierge* goes up with the post or when a maid takes her mistress's breakfast into the bedroom that things like that come to light."

He claimed no special merit in knowing a thing like that. It was just a fact. A bit earlier in summer, of course, and later in winter. On Christmas Day probably later still, as a considerable part of the population hadn't got to bed till two or even later, to say nothing of their having to sleep off a good many glasses of champagne.

Before then still more water would have gone under the bridge, a few more stolen cars, a few belated drunks, a few. . . .

"Hallo! . . . Saint-Gervais? . . ."

His Paris was not the one known to the rest of us—the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, the Opera—but one of sombre, massive buildings, with a police-car waiting under the blue lamp and the bicycles of the *agents cyclists* leaning against the wall.

"The Chief is convinced the chap'll have another go to-night," said Janvier. "It's just the night for people of that sort. Seems to excite them."

No name was mentioned, for none was known. Nor could he be described as the man in the fawn raincoat or the man in the grey hat, since no one had ever seen him. For a while the papers had referred to him as Monsieur Dimanche, as his first three murders had been on Sunday, but since then five others had been on week-days, at the rate of about one a week, though not quite regularly.

"It's because of him you've been on all night, is it?" asked Mambret.

Janvier wasn't the only one. All over Paris extra men were on duty, watching or waiting.

"You'll see," put in Sommer, "when you do get him you'll find he's only a loony."

"Loony or no, he's killed eight people," sighed Janvier, sipping his coffee. "Look, Lecœur! There's one of your lamps burning."

"Hallo! . . . Your car's out? . . . What's that? . . . Just a moment. . . ."

They could see Lecœur hesitate, not knowing in which column to put a cross. There was one for hangings, one for those who jumped out of the window, another for . . .

"Here, listen to this. . . . On the Pont d'Austerlitz a chap climbed up on to the parapet. He had his legs tied together and a cord round his neck with the end made fast to a lamp-post, and, as he threw himself over, he fired a shot into his head!"

"Taking no risks, what. . . . And which column does that one go into?"

"There's one for neurasthenics. We may as well call it that!"

Those who hadn't been to Midnight Mass were now on their way to early service. With hands thrust deep in their pockets and drops on the ends of their noses, they walked bent forward into the cutting wind, which seemed to blow up a fine, icy dust from the pavements. It would soon be time for the children to be waking up, jumping out of bed, and gathering barefoot round lighted Christmas trees.

"But it's not at all sure the fellow's mad. In fact, the experts say that if he was, he'd always do it the same way. If it was a knife, then it would always be a knife."

"What did he use last time?"

"A hammer."

"And the time before?"

"A dagger."

"What makes you think it's the same chap?"

"First of all, the fact that there've been eight murders in quick succession. You don't get eight new murderers cropping up in Paris all at once."

Belonging to the *Police Judiciaire*, Janvier had, of course, heard the subject discussed at length.

"Besides, there's a sort of family likeness between them all. The victims are invariably solitary people, people who live alone, without any family or friends."

Sommer looked at Lecœur, whom he could never forgive for not being a family man. Not only had he five children himself, but a sixth was already on the way.

"You'd better look out, Lecœur! You see the kind of thing it leads to!"

"Then, not one of the crimes has been committed in one of the wealthier districts. . . ."

"Yet he steals, doesn't he?"

"He does, but not much. The little hoards hidden under the mattress—that's his mark. He doesn't break in. In fact, apart from the murder and the money missing, he leaves no trace at all."

Another lamp burning. A stolen car found abandoned in a little side street, near the Place des Ternes.

"All the same, I can't help laughing over the people who had to walk home. . . ."

Another hour or more and they would be relieved, except Lecœur, who had promised to do the first day shift as well, so that his opposite number could join in a family Christmas party somewhere near Rouen.

It was a thing he often did, so much so that he had come to be regarded as an ever-ready substitute for anybody who wanted a day off.

"I say, Lecœur. . . . Do you think you could look out for me on Friday?"

At first the request was proffered with a suitable excuse, a sick mother, a funeral, or a first communion, and he was generally rewarded with a bottle of wine. But now it was taken for granted and treated quite casually.

To tell the truth, had it been possible, Lecœur would have been only too glad to spend his whole life in that room, snatching a few hours' sleep on a camp bed and picnicking as best he could with the aid of the little electric stove. It was a funny thing: although he was as careful as any of the others about his personal appearance, and much more so than Sommer, who always looked a bit tousled, yet there was something a bit drab about him which betrayed the bachelor.

He wore strong glasses which gave him big, globular eyes, and it came as a surprise to everyone, when he took them off to wipe them with the bit of chamois leather he always carried about, to see the transformation. Without them, his eyes were gentle, rather shy, and inclined to look away quickly when anyone looked his way.

"Hallo! Javel? . . ."

Another lamp. One near the Quai de Javel in the 15th *arrondissement*, a district full of factories.

"*Votre car est sorti?*"

"We don't know yet what it is. Someone's broken the glass of the alarm in the Rue Leblanc."

"Wasn't there a message?"

"No. We've sent our car to investigate. I'll ring you again later."

Scattered here and there all over Paris are red-painted telephone pillars standing by the curb, and you have only to break the glass to be in direct telephone communication with the nearest police-station. Had a passer-by broken the glass accidentally? It looked like it, for a couple of minutes later Javel rang up again.

"Hallo! Central? . . . Our car's just got back. Nobody about. The whole district seems quiet as the grave. All the same, we've sent out a patrol."

How was Lecœur to classify that one? Unwilling to admit defeat, he put a little cross in the column on the extreme right headed "Miscellaneous."

"Is there any coffee left?" he asked.

"I'll make some more."

The same lamp lit up again, barely ten minutes after the first call.

"Javel? . . . What's it this time?"

"Same again. Another glass broken."

"Nothing said?"

"Not a word. Must be some practical joker. Thinks it funny to keep us on the hop. When we catch him he'll find out whether it's funny or not!"

"Which one was it?"

"The one on the Pont Mirabeau."

"Seems to walk pretty quickly, your practical joker!"

There was indeed quite a good stretch between the two pillars.

So far, nobody was taking it very seriously. False alarms were not uncommon. Some people took advantage of these handy instruments to express their feelings about the police.

"*Mort aux flics!*" was the favourite phrase.

With his feet on a radiator, Janvier was just dozing off, when he heard Lecœur telephoning again. He half-opened his eyes, saw which lamp was on, and muttered sleepily:

"There he is again!"

He was right. A glass broken at the top of the Avenue de Versailles.

"Silly ass!" he grunted, settling down again.

It wouldn't be really light until half-past seven or even eight. Sometimes they could hear a vague sound of church bells, but that was in another world. The wretched men of the flying squad waiting in the cars below must be half-frozen.

"Talking of *boudin*..."

"What *boudin*?" murmured Janvier, whose cheeks were flushed with sleep.

"The one my mother used to..."

"Hallo! What?... You're not going to tell me someone's smashed the glass of one of your telephone pillars?... Really?... It must be the same chap.... We've already had two reported from the 15th.... Yes, they tried to nab him, but couldn't find a soul about.... Gets about pretty fast, doesn't he?... He crossed the river by the Pont Mirabeau.... Seems to be heading in this direction.... Yes. You may as well have a try...."

Another little cross. By half-past seven, with only half-an-hour of the night watch to go, there were five crosses in the Miscellaneous column.

Mad or sane, the person was a good walker. Perhaps the cold wind had something to do with it. It wasn't the weather for sauntering along.

For a time it had looked as though he was keeping to the right bank of the Seine, then he had sheered off into the wealthy Auteuil district, breaking a glass in the Rue La Fontaine.

"He's only five minutes' walk from the Bois de Boulogne," Lecœur had said. "If he once gets there, they'll never pick him up."

But the fellow had turned round and made for the quays again, breaking a glass in the Rue Berton, just round the corner from the Quai de Passy.

The first calls had come from the poorer quarters of Grenelle, but the man had only to cross the river to find himself in entirely different surroundings, quiet, spacious and deserted streets, where his footfalls must have rung out clearly on the frosty pavements.

Sixth call. Skirting the Place du Trocadéro, he was in the Rue de Longchamp.

"The chap seems to think he's on a paper-chase," remarked Mambret. "Only he uses broken glass instead of paper."

Other calls came in in quick succession. Another stolen car, a revolver-shot in the Rue de Flandres, whose victim swore he didn't know who fired it, though he'd been seen all through the night drinking in company with another man.

"Hallo! Here's Javel again.... Hallo! Javel? It can't be your practical joker this time: he must be somewhere near the Champs Elysées by now.... Oh, yes. He's still at it.... Well, what's your trouble?... What?... Spell it, will you?... Rue Michat. Yes, I've got it. Between the Rue Lecourbe and the Boulevard Félix Faure.... By the viaduct—yes, I know.... No. 17.... Who reported it?... The *concierge*?... She's just been up, I suppose.... Oh, shut up, will you!... No, I wasn't speaking to you. It's Sommer here, who can't stop talking about a *boudin* he ate thirty years ago!..."

Sommer broke off and listened to the man on the switchboard.

"What were you saying?... A shabby, seven-story block of flats.... Yes...."

There were plenty of buildings like that in the district, buildings that weren't really old, but of such poor construction that they were already dilapidated. Buildings that as often as not thrust themselves up bleakly in the middle of a bit of waste land, towering over the little shacks and hovels around them, their blind walls plastered with advertisements.

"You say she heard someone running downstairs and then a door slam.... The door of the house, I suppose.... On which floor is the flat?... The *entresol*.... Which way does it face?... On to an inner courtyard.... Just a moment. There's a call coming in from the 8th. That must be our friend of the telephone pillars...."

Lecœur asked the new caller to wait, then came back to Javel.

"An old woman, you say.... Madame Fayet.... Worked as charwoman.... Dead?... A blunt instrument.... Is the doctor there?... You're sure she's dead?... What about her money? I suppose she had some tucked away somewhere.... Right. Call me back.... Or I'll ring you...."

He turned to the detective, who was now sleeping soundly.

"Janvier! Hey! Janvier!... This is for you."

"What? What is it?"

"The killer."

"Where?"

"Near the Rue Lecourbe. Here's the address.... This time he's done in an old charwoman, a Madam Fayet."

Janvier put on his overcoat, looked round for his hat, and gulped down the remains of the coffee in his cup.

"Who's dealing with it?"

"Gonesse, of the 15th."

"Ring up the P.J., will you, and tell them I've gone there...."

A minute or two later, Lecœur was able to add another little cross to the six that were already in the column. Someone had smashed the

glass of the pillar in the Avenue d'Iéna only 150 yards from the Arc de Triomphe.

"Among the broken glass they found a handkerchief flecked with blood. It was a child's handkerchief."

"Has it got initials?"

"No. It's a blue check handkerchief, rather dirty. The chap must have wrapped it round his knuckles for breaking the glass."

There were steps in the corridor. The day shift coming to take over. They looked very clean and close-shaven and the cold wind had whipped the blood into their cheeks.

"Happy Christmas!"

Sommer closed the tin in which he brought his sandwiches. Mambret knocked out his pipe. Only Lecœur remained in his seat, since there was no relief for him.

The fat Godin had been the first to arrive, promptly changing his jacket for the grey linen coat in which he always worked, then putting some water on to boil for his grog. All through the winter he suffered from one never-ending cold which he combated, or perhaps nourished, by one hot grog after another.

"Hallo! Yes, I'm still here. I'm doing a shift for Potier who's gone down to his family in Normandy.... Yes. I want to hear all about it.... Most particularly.... Janvier's gone, but I'll pass it on to the P.J. An invalid, you say?... What invalid?"

One had to be patient on that job, as people always talked about their cases as though everyone else was in the picture.

"A low building behind, right.... Not in the Rue Michat, then?... Rue Vasco de Gama.... Yes, yes. I know. The little house with a garden behind some railings.... Only I didn't know he was an invalid.... Right.... He doesn't sleep much.... Saw a young boy climbing up a drain-pipe?... How old?... He couldn't say?... Of course not, in the dark.... How did he know it was a boy, then?... Listen, ring me up again, will you?... Oh, you're going off.... Who's relieving you?... Jules?... Right. Well, ask him to keep me informed...."

"What's going on?" asked Godin.

"An old woman who's been done in. Down by the Rue Lecourbe."

"Who did it?"

"There's an invalid opposite who says he saw a small boy climbing up a drain-pipe and along the top of a wall."

"You mean to say it was a boy who killed the old woman?"

"We don't know yet...."

No one was very interested. After all, murders were an everyday matter to these people. The lights were still on in the room, as it was still only a bleak, dull daylight that found its way through the frosty window-panes. One of the new watch went and scratched a bit of the frost away. It was instinctive. A childish memory perhaps, like Sommer's *boudin*.

The latter had gone home. So had Mambret. The newcomers settled down to their work, turning over the papers on their desks.

A car stolen from the Square la Bruyère.

Lecœur looked pensively at his seven crosses. Then, with a sigh, he got up and stood gazing at the immense street plan on the wall.

"Brushing up your Paris, are you?"

"I think I know it pretty well already. Something's just struck me. There's a chap wandering about smashing the glass of telephone pillars. Seven in the last hour and a half. He hasn't been going in a straight line, but zigzagging first this way, then that...."

"Perhaps he doesn't know Paris."

"Or knows it only too well! Not once has he ventured within sight of a police-station. If he'd gone straight, he'd have passed two or three. What's more, he's skirted all the main crossroads, where there'd be likely to be a man on point duty."

Lecœur pointed them out.

"The only risk he took was in crossing the Pont Mirabeau, but if he wanted to cross the river he'd have run that risk at any of the bridges."

"I expect he's drunk," said Godin, sipping his rum.

"What I want to know is why he's stopped."

"Perhaps he's got home."

"A man who's down by the Quai de Javel at half-past six in the morning isn't likely to live near the Etoile."

"Seems to interest you a lot!"

"It's got me scared!"

"Go on!"

It was strange to see the worried expression on Lecœur's face. He was notorious for his calmness and his most dramatic nights were coolly summarised by the little crosses in his notebook.

"Hallo! Javel?... Is that Jules?... Lecœur speaking.... Look here, Jules. Behind the flats in the Rue Michat is the little house where the invalid lives.... Well now, on one side of it is an apartment house, a red brick building with a grocer's shop on the ground floor. You know it? Good.... Has anything happened there?... Nothing reported.... No, we've heard nothing here.... All the same.... I can't explain why, but I think you ought to enquire...."

He was hot all at once. He stubbed out a half-finished cigarette.

"Hallo! Ternes?... Any alarms gone off in your neighbourhood? Nothing? Only drunks?... Is the *patrouille cycliste* out?... Just leaving?... Ask them to keep their eyes open for a young boy looking tired and very likely bleeding from the right hand.... Lost?... Not exactly that.... I can't explain now...."

His eyes went back to the street plan on the wall, in which no light went on for a good ten minutes, and then only for an accidental death in the 18th *arrondissement*, right up at the top of Montmartre, caused by an escape of gas.

Outside, in the cold streets of Paris, dark figures were hurrying home from the churches.

II.

One of the sharpest impressions that André Lecœur retained of his infancy was one of immobility. His world at that period was a large kitchen in Orléans, on the outskirts of the town. He must have spent his winters there too, but he remembered it best flooded with sunlight, with the door wide open on to a little garden where hens clucked incessantly and rabbits nibbled lettuce leaves behind the wire netting of their hutches. But, if the door was open, its passage was barred to him by a little gate which his father had made one Sunday for that express purpose.

On week-days, at half-past eight, his father went off on his bicycle to the gasworks at the other end of the town. His mother did the housework, doing just the same things in the same order every day. Before making the beds, she put the bedclothes over the window-sill for an hour to air.

At ten o'clock a little bell would ring in the street. That was the greengrocer, with his barrow, passing on his daily round. Twice a week at eleven a bearded doctor came to see his little brother, who was constantly ill. André hardly ever saw the latter, as he wasn't allowed into his room.

That was all, or so it seemed in retrospect. He had just time to play a bit and drink his milk, and there was his father home again for the mid-day meal.

If nothing had happened at home, lots had happened to him. He had been to read the meters in any number of houses and chatted with all sorts of people, about whom he would talk during dinner.

As for the afternoon, it slipped away quicker still, perhaps because he was made to sleep during the first part of it.

For his mother, apparently, the time passed just as quickly. Often had he heard her say with a sigh:

"There! I've no sooner washed up after one meal than it's time to start making another!"

Perhaps it wasn't so very different now. Here in the Préfecture de Police the nights seemed long enough at the time, but at the end they seemed to have slipped by in no time, with nothing to show for them except for these columns of the little crosses in his notebook.

A few more lamps lit up. A few more incidents reported, including a collision between a car and a bus in the Rue de Clignancourt, and then once again it was Javel on the line.

It wasn't Jules, however, but Gonesse, the detective who'd been to the scene of the crime. While there, he had received Lecœur's message suggesting something might have happened in the other house in the Rue Vasco de Gama. He had been to see.

"Is that you, Lecœur?"

There was a queer note in his voice. It might have been either irritation or suspicion.

"Look here. . . . What made you think of that house. Do you know the old woman, Madame Fayet?"

"I've never seen her, but I know all about her."

What had finally come to pass that Christmas morning was something that André Lecœur had foreseen and perhaps dreaded for more than ten years. Again and again, as he stared at the huge plan of Paris, with its little lamps, he had said to himself:

"It's only a question of time. Sooner or later, it'll be something that's happened to someone I know."

There'd been many a near miss, an accident in his own street or a crime in a house near by. But, like thunder, it had approached only to recede once again into the distance.

This time it was a direct hit.

"Have you seen the *concierge*?" he asked.

He could imagine the puzzled look on the detective's face as he went on:

"Is the boy at home?"

And Gonesse muttered:

"Oh? So you know him, too?"

"He's my nephew. Weren't you told his name was Lecœur?"

"Yes, but . . ."

"Never mind about that. Tell me what's happened."

"The boy's not there."

"What about his father?"

"He got home just after seven."

"As usual. He does night work, too."

"The *concierge* heard him go up to his flat—on the third floor at the back of the house."

"I know it."

"He came running down a minute or two later, in a great state. To use her expression, he seemed out of his wits."

"The boy had disappeared?"

"Yes. His father wanted to know if she'd seen him leave the house. She hadn't. Then he asked if a telegram had been delivered."

"Was there a telegram?"

"No. Can you make head or tail of it? . . . Since you're one of the family you might be able to help us. Could you get someone to relieve you and come round here?"

"It wouldn't do any good. Where's Janvier?"

"In the old woman's room. The men of the *Identité Judiciaire* have already got to work. The first thing they found were some child's fingerprints on the handle of the door. Come on! Jump into a taxi and come round. . . ."

"No. In any case there's no one to take my place."

That was true enough up to a point. All the same, if he'd really got to work on the telephone he'd have found someone all right. The truth was he didn't want to go and didn't think it would do any good if he did.

"Listen, Gonesse. . . . I've got to find that boy, and I can do it better from here than anywhere. You understand, don't you? . . . Tell Janvier I'm staying here. And tell him old Madame Fayet had plenty of money, probably hidden away somewhere in the room."

A little feverishly he stuck his plug into one socket after another, calling up the various police stations of the 8th *arrondissement*.

"Keep a look-out for a boy of ten, rather poorly dressed. . . . Keep all telephone pillars under observation."

His two fellow-watchkeepers looked at him with curiosity.

"Do you think it was the boy who did the job?"

Lecœur didn't bother to answer. The next moment he was through to the teleprinter room, where they also dealt with radio messages.

"Justin? . . . Oh, you're on, are you? . . . Here's something special. . . . Will you send out a call to all cars on patrol anywhere near the Etoile to keep a look out for. . . ."

Once again the description of the boy, François Lecœur.

"No. I've no idea in which direction he'll be making. All I can tell you is that he seems to keep well clear of police stations, and as far as possible from any place where there's likely to be anyone on traffic duty."

He knew his brother's flat in the Rue Vasco de Gama. Two rather dark rooms and a tiny kitchen. The boy slept there alone, while his father was at work. From the windows you could see the back of the house in the Rue Michat, across a courtyard generally hung with washing. On some of the window-sills were pots of geraniums, and through the windows, many of which were uncurtained, you could catch glimpses of a miscellaneous assortment of humanity.

As a matter of fact, there, too, the window-panes ought to be covered with frost. He stored that idea up in a corner of his mind. It might be important.

"You think it's a boy who's been smashing the alarm glasses?"

"It was a child's handkerchief they found," said Lecœur curtly.

He didn't want to be drawn into a discussion. He sat mutely at the switchboard, wondering what to do next.

In the Rue Michat things seemed to be moving fast. The next time he got through it was to learn that a doctor was there as well as an examining magistrate, who had most likely been dragged from his bed.

What help could Lecœur have given them? But if he wasn't there, he could see the place almost as clearly as those that were, the dismal houses and the grimy viaduct of the Métro which cut right across the landscape.

Nothing but poor people in that neighbourhood. The younger generation's one hope was to escape from it. The middle-aged already doubted whether they ever would, while the old ones had already accepted their fate and tried to make the best of it.

He rang Javel once again.

"Is Gonesse still there?"

"He's writing up his report. Shall I call him?"

"Yes, please. . . . Hallo, Gonesse! . . . Lecœur speaking. . . . Sorry to bother you, but did you go up to my brother's flat? . . . Had the boy's bed been slept in? . . . It had? Good. That makes it look a bit better. . . . Another thing: were there any parcels there? . . . Yes, parcels, Christmas presents. . . . What? . . . A small wireless set. . . . Hadn't been unpacked. . . . Naturally. . . . Anything else? Things to eat? . . . What were they? . . . A chicken, a *boudin*, a Saint-Honoré. . . . I suppose Janvier's not with you? . . . Still on the spot. Right. . . . Has he rung up the P.J.? . . . Good. . . ."

He was surprised to see it was already half-past nine. It was no use now expecting anything from the neighbourhood of the Etoile. If the boy had gone on walking as he had been earlier, he could be pretty well anywhere by this time.

"Hallo! . . . *Police Judiciaire*? . . . Is Inspector Saillard there?"

He was another whom the murder had dragged from his fireside. How many people were there whose Christmas was going to be spoiled by it?

"Excuse my troubling you, *Monsieur le Commissaire*. . . . It's about that boy, François Lecœur. . . ."

"Do you know anything? Is he a relation of yours?"

"He's my brother's son. . . . And it looks as if he may well be the person who's been smashing the glasses of the telephone pillars. Seven of them. I don't know whether they've had time to tell you about that. . . . What I wanted to ask was whether I might put out a general call. . . ."

"Could you nip over to see me?"

"There's no one here to take my place."

"Right. I'll come over myself. Meanwhile you can send out the call."

Lecœur kept calm though his hand shook slightly as he plugged in once again to the room above.

"Justin? . . . Lecœur again. . . . *Appel Général*. Yes. It's the same boy. François Lecœur. Ten and a half. Rather tall for his age. Thin. I don't know what he's wearing, probably a khaki jumper made from American battle-dress. No. No cap. He's always bare-headed, with plenty of hair flopping over his forehead. . . . Perhaps it would be as well to send out a description of his father, too. That's not so easy. . . . You know me, don't you? Well, Olivier Lecœur is rather like a paler version of me. He has a timid look about him and physically he's not robust. The sort that's never in the middle of the pavement but always dodging out of other people's way. He walks a bit queerly, owing to a wound he got in the first war. . . . No, I haven't the least idea where they might be going, only I don't think they're together. To my mind, the boy is probably in danger. I can't explain why; it would take too long. . . . Get the descriptions out as quickly as possible, will you? And let me know if there's any response."

By the time Lecœur had finished telephoning, Inspector Saillard was there, having only had to come round the corner from the Quai des Orfèvres. He was an imposing figure of a man, particularly in his bulky overcoat. With a comprehensive wave of the hand he greeted the three men on watch, then, seizing a chair as though it were a wisp of straw, he swung it round towards him and sat down heavily.

"The boy?" he enquired at last, looking keenly at Lecœur.

"I can't understand why he's stopped calling us up."

"Calling us up?"

"Attracting our attention, anyway."

"But why should he attract our attention and then not say anything?"

"Supposing he was followed. Or was following someone."

"I see what you mean. . . . Look here, Lecœur, is your brother in financial straits?"

"He's a poor man, yes."

"Is that all?"

"He lost his job three months ago."

"What job?"

"He was linotype operator at *La Presse* in the Rue du Croissant. He was on the night shift. He always did night work. Seems to run in the family."

"How did he come to lose his job?"

"I suppose he fell out with somebody."

"Is that a failing of his?"

They were interrupted by an incoming call from the 18th to say that a boy selling branches of holly had been picked up in the Rue Lepic. It turned out, however, to be a little Pole who could hardly speak a word of French.

"You were asking if my brother was in the habit of quarrelling with people. I hardly know what to answer. He was never strong. Pretty well all his childhood he was ill on and off. He hardly ever went to school. But he read a great deal all alone in his room."

"Is he married?"

"His wife died two years after they were married, leaving him with a baby ten months old."

"Did he bring it up himself?"

"Entirely. I can see him now bathing the little chap, changing his nappies, and warming the milk for his bottle. . . ."

"That doesn't explain why he quarrels with people."

Admittedly. But it was difficult to put it into words.

"Soured?"

"Not exactly. The thing is. . . ."

"What?"

"That he's never lived like other people. Perhaps Olivier isn't really very intelligent. Perhaps, from reading so much, he knows too much about some things and too little about others."

"Do you think him capable of killing the old woman?"

The Inspector puffed at his pipe. They could hear the people in the room above walking about. The two other men fiddled with their papers, pretending not to listen.

"She was his mother-in-law," sighed Lecœur. "You'd have found it out anyhow, sooner or later."

"They didn't hit it off?"

"She hated him."

"Why?"

"She considered him responsible for her daughter's death. It seems she could have been saved if the operation had been done in time. It wasn't my brother's fault. The people at the hospital refused to take her in. Some silly question of her papers not being in order. All the same, Madame Fayet held to it that Olivier was to blame."

"Did they see each other?"

"Not unless they passed each other in the street, and then they never spoke."

"Did the boy know?"

"That she was his grandmother? I don't think so."

"You think his father never told him?"

Never for more than a second or two did Lecœur's eyes leave the plan of Paris, but, besides being Christmas, it was the quiet time of the day, and the little lamps lit up rarely. Two or three street accidents, a lady's handbag snatched in the Métro, a suitcase pinched at the Gare de l'Est.

No sign of the boy. It was surprising considering how few people were about. In the poor quarters a few little children played on the pavements with their new toys, but on the whole the day was lived indoors. Nearly all the shops were shuttered and the cafés and the little bars were almost empty.

For a moment the town came to life a bit when the church bells started pealing and families in their Sunday best hurried to High Mass. But soon the streets were quiet again, though haunted here and there by the vague rumble of an organ or a sudden gust of singing.

The thought of churches gave Lecœur an idea. Might not the boy have tucked himself away in one of them? Would the police think of looking there? He spoke to Inspector Saillard about it and then got through to Justin for the third time.

"The churches. . . . Ask them to have a look at the congregations. . . . They'll be doing the stations, of course—that's most important. . . ."

He took off his glasses for a moment, showing eyelids that were red, probably from lack of sleep.

"Hallo! . . . Yes. The Inspector's here. Hold on."

He held the receiver to Saillard.

"It's Janvier, who'd like to have a word with you."

The bitter wind was still driving through the streets. The light was harsh and bleak, though here and there among the closely packed clouds was a yellowy streak which could be taken as a faint promise of sunshine to come.

When the Inspector put down the receiver he muttered:

"Dr. Paul says the crime was committed between five and half-past six this morning. The old woman wasn't killed by the first blow. Apparently she was in bed when she heard a noise and got up and faced the intruder. Indeed, it looks as though she tried to defend herself with the only weapon that came to hand—a shoe."

"Have they found the weapon she was killed with?"

"No. It might have been a hammer. More likely a bit of lead piping or something of that sort."

"Have they found her money?"

"Only her purse, with some small change in it and her identity card. Tell me, Lecœur, did you know she was a money-lender?"

"Yes. I knew."

"And didn't you tell me your brother's been out of work for three months?"

"He has."

"The *concierge* didn't know."

"Neither did the boy. It was for his sake he kept it dark."

The Inspector crossed and uncrossed his legs. He was uncomfortable. He glanced at the other two men who couldn't help hearing everything, then turned with a puzzled look to stare at Lecœur.

"Do you realise what all this is pointing to?"

"I do."

"You've thought of it yourself?"

"No."

"Because he's your brother?"

"No."

"How long is it that this killer's been at work? Nine weeks, isn't it?"

Without haste, Lecœur studied the columns of his notebook.

"Yes. Just over nine weeks. The first was on the 20th of October, in the Epinettes district."

"You say your brother didn't tell his son he was out of a job. . . . Do you mean to say he went on leaving home in the evening just as though he was going to work?"

"Yes. He couldn't face the idea of telling him. You see. . . . It's difficult to explain. He was completely wrapped up in the boy. He was all he had to live for. He cooked and scrubbed for him, tucked him up in bed before going off and woke him up in the morning. . . ."

"That doesn't explain why he couldn't tell him."

"He couldn't bear the thought of appearing to the kid as a failure, a man nobody wanted and who had doors slammed in his face."

"But what did he do with himself all night?"

"Odd jobs. When he could get them. For a fortnight he was employed as night watchman in a factory in Billancourt, but that was only while the regular man was ill. Often he got a few hours' work washing down cars in one of the big garages. When that failed he'd sometimes lend a hand at the market, unloading vegetables. When he had one of his bouts. . . ."

"Bouts of what?"

"Asthma. . . . He had them from time to time. . . . Then he'd lie down in a station waiting-room. Once he spent a whole night here, chatting with me. . . ."

"Now, suppose the boy woke up early this morning and saw his father at Madame Fayet's."

"There was frost on the windows."

"There wouldn't be if the window was open. Lots of people sleep with their windows open, even in the coldest weather."

"It wasn't the case with my brother. He was always a chilly person. And he was much too poor to waste warmth."

"As far as his window was concerned, the boy had only to scratch away the frost with his finger-nails. When I was a boy. . . ."

"Yes. So did I. . . . The thing is to find out whether the old woman's window was open."

"It was, and the light was switched on."

"I wonder where François can have got to."

"The boy?"

It was surprising, and a little disconcerting, the way he kept all the time reverting to him. The situation was certainly embarrassing, and somehow made all the more so by the calm way in which André Lecœur gave the Inspector the most damaging details about his brother.

"When he came in this morning," began Saillard again, "he was carrying a number of parcels. You realise. . . ."

"It's Christmas."

"Yes. But he'd have needed quite a bit of money to buy a chicken, a cake, and a wireless-set. Has he borrowed any from you lately?"

"Not for a month. I haven't seen him for a month. I wish I had. I'd have told him I was getting a wireless set for François myself. I've got it here. Downstairs, that is, in the cloak-room. I was going to take it straight round as soon as I was relieved."

"Would Madame Fayet have consented to lend him money?"

"It's unlikely. She was a queer lot. She must have had quite enough money to live on, yet she still went out to work, charing from morning to evening. Often she lent money to the people she worked for. At exorbitant interest, of course. All the neighbourhood knew about it, and people always came to her when they needed something to tide them over till the end of the month."

Still embarrassed, the Inspector rose to his feet.

"I'm going to have a look," he said.

"At Madame Fayet's?"

"There and in the Rue Vasco de Gama. If you get any news, let me know, will you?"

"You won't find any telephone there, but I can get a message to you through the Javel police-station."

The Inspector's footsteps had hardly died away before the telephone bell rang. No lamp had lit up on the wall. This was an outside call, coming from the Gare d'Austerlitz.

"Lecœur? Station police speaking. We've got him."

"Who?"

"The man whose description was circulated. Lecœur. Same as you. Olivier Lecœur. No doubt about it, I've seen his identity card."

"Hold on, will you?"

Lecœur dashed out of the room and down the stairs, just in time to

catch the Inspector as he was getting into one of the cars belonging to the *Préfecture*.

"Inspector! . . . The Gare d'Austerlitz is on the 'phone. They've found my brother."

Saillard was a stout man and he went up the stairs puffing and blowing. He took the receiver himself.

"Hallo! . . . Yes. . . . Where was he? . . . What was he doing? . . . What? . . . No. There's no point in your questioning him now. . . . You're sure he didn't know? . . . Right. Go on looking out. . . . It's quite possible. . . . As for him, send him here straight away. . . . At the *Préfecture*, yes. . . ."

He hesitated for a second and glanced at Lecœur before saying finally:

"Yes. Send someone with him. We can't take any risks."

The Inspector filled his pipe and lit it before explaining, and when he spoke he looked at nobody in particular.

"He was picked up after he'd been wandering about the station for over an hour. He seemed very jumpy. Said he was waiting there to meet his son, from whom he'd received a message."

"Did they tell him about the murder?"

"Yes. He appeared to be staggered by the news and terrified. I asked them to bring him along."

Rather diffidently he added:

"I asked them to bring him here. Considering your relationship . . . I didn't want you to think . . ."

"Thanks."

Lecœur had been in that room since eleven o'clock the night before. It was rather like his early years, when he spent his days in his mother's kitchen. Around him was an unchanging world. There were the little lamps, of course, that kept going on and off, but that's what they always did. They were part and parcel of the immutability of the place. Time flowed by without anyone noticing it.

Yet outside Paris was celebrating Christmas. Thousands of people had been to Midnight Mass, thousands more had spent the night roistering, and those who hadn't known where to draw the line had sobered down in the *dépôt* and were now being called upon to explain things they couldn't remember doing.

What had his brother Olivier been doing all through the night? An old woman had been found dead. A boy had started before dawn on a breathless race through the streets, breaking the glass of the telephone pillars as he passed them, having wrapped his handkerchief round his fist.

And what was Olivier waiting for at the Gare d'Austerlitz, sometimes in the overheated waiting-rooms, sometimes on the windswept platforms, too nervous to settle down in any one place for long?

Less than ten minutes elapsed, just time enough for Godin, whose nose really was running, to make himself another glass of hot grog.

"Can I offer you one, Monsieur le Commissaire?"

"No, thanks."

Looking more embarrassed than ever, Saillard leant over towards Lecœur to say in an undertone:

"Would you like us to question him in another room?"

No. Lecœur wasn't going to leave his post for anything. He wanted to stay there, with his little lamps and his switchboard. Was it that he was thinking more of the boy than of his brother?

Olivier came in with a detective on either side, but they had spared him the handcuffs. He looked dreadful, like a bad photograph faded with age. At once he turned to André.

"Where's François?"

"We don't know. We're hunting for him."

"Where?"

André Lecœur pointed to his plan of Paris and his switchboard of a thousand lines.

"Everywhere."

The two detectives had already been sent away.

"Sit down," said the Inspector. "I believe you've been told of Madame Fayet's death."

Olivier didn't wear spectacles, but he had the same pale and rather fugitive eyes as his brother had when he took his glasses off. He glanced at the Inspector, by whom he didn't seem the least overawed, then turned back to André:

"He left a note for me," he said, delving into one of the pockets of his grubby mackintosh. "Here. See if you can understand."

He held out a bit of paper torn out of a schoolboy's exercise book. The writing wasn't any too good. It didn't look as though François was the best of pupils. He had used an indelible pencil, wetting the end in his mouth, so that his lips were very likely stained with it.

Uncle Gédéon arrives this morning Gare d'Austerlitz. Come as soon as you can and meet us there. Love. Bib.

Without a word, André Lecœur passed it on to the Inspector, who turned it over and over with his thick fingers.

"What's Bib stand for?"

"It's his nickname. A baby name. I never use it when other people are about. It comes from *biberon*. . . . When I used to give him his bottle. . . ."

He spoke in a toneless voice. He seemed to be in a fog and was probably only dimly conscious of where he was.

"Who's Uncle Gédéon?"

"There isn't any such person."

Did he realise he was talking to the head of the *Brigade des Homicides*, who was at the moment investigating a murder?

It was his brother who came to the rescue, explaining:

"As a matter of fact, we had an Uncle Gédéon, but he's been dead for some years. He was one of my mother's brothers who emigrated to America as a young man."

Olivier looked at his brother as much as to say:

"What's the point of going into that?"

"We got into the habit, in the family, of speaking—jocularly, of course—of our rich American uncle and of the fortune he'd leave us one day."

"Was he rich?"

"We didn't know. We never heard from him except for a postcard once a year, signed Gédéon. Wishing us a happy New Year."

"He died?"

"When François was four."

"Really, André. . . . Do you think it's any use. . . ."

"Let me go on. The Inspector wants to know everything. . . . My brother carried on the family tradition, talking to his son about our Uncle Gédéon, who had become by now quite a legendary figure. He provided a theme for bedtime stories, and all sorts of adventures were attributed to him. Naturally he was fabulously rich, and when one day he came back to France. . . ."

"I understand. . . . He died out there?"

"In a hospital in Cleveland. It was then we found out he had been really a porter in a restaurant. It would have been too cruel to tell the boy that, so the legend went on."

"Did he believe in it?"

It was Olivier who answered:

"My brother thought he didn't, that he'd guessed the truth but wasn't going to spoil the game. But I always maintained the contrary, and I'm still practically certain he took it all in. He was like that. Long after his schoolfellows had stopped believing in Father Christmas, he still went on."

Talking about his son brought him back to life, transfigured him.

"But as for this note he left, I don't know what to make of it. I asked the *concierge* if a telegram had come. For a moment I thought André might have played us a practical joke, but I soon dismissed the idea. It isn't much of a joke to get a boy dashing off to a station on a freezing night. Naturally I dashed off to the Gare d'Austerlitz as fast as I could. There I hunted high and low, then wandered about, waiting anxiously for him to turn up. . . . André, you're sure he hasn't been. . . ."

He looked at the street plan on the wall and at the switchboard. He knew very well that every accident was reported.

"He hasn't been run over," said André. "At about eight o'clock he was near the Etoile, but we've completely lost track of him since then."

"Near the Etoile? How do you know?"

"It's rather a long story, but it boils down to this, that a whole series of alarms were set off by someone smashing the glass. They followed a circuitous route from your place to the Arc de Triomphe. At the foot of the last one they found a blue check handkerchief, a boy's handkerchief, amongst the broken glass."

"He has handkerchiefs like that."

"From eight o'clock onwards, not a sign of him."

"Then I'd better get back to the station. He's certain to go there, if he told me to meet him there."

He was surprised at the sudden silence with which his last words were greeted. He looked from one to the other, perplexed, then anxious.

"What is it?"

His brother looked down at the floor. Inspector Saillard cleared his throat, hesitated, then asked:

"Did you go to see your mother-in-law last night?"

Perhaps, as his brother had suggested, Olivier was rather lacking in intelligence. It took a long time for the words to sink in. You could follow their progress in his features.

He had been gazing rather blankly at the Inspector. Suddenly he swung round on his brother, his cheeks red, his eyes flashing.

"André! You dare to suggest that I. . . ."

Without the slightest transition, his indignation faded away. He leant forward in his chair, took his head in his two hands and burst into a fit of raucous weeping.

III.

Ill at ease, Inspector Saillard looked at André Lecœur, surprised at the latter's calmness, and a little shocked, perhaps, by what he may well have taken for heartlessness. Perhaps Saillard had never had a brother of his own. André had known his since childhood. It wasn't the first time he had seen Olivier break down. Not by any means. And this time he was almost pleased, as it might have been a great deal worse. What he had dreaded was the moment of indignation, and he was relieved that it had passed so quickly. Had he continued on that tack, he'd have ended by putting everyone's back up, which would have done him no good at all.

Wasn't that how he'd lost one job after another? For weeks, for months, he would go meekly about his work, toeing the line and swallowing what he felt to be humiliations, till all at once he could hold no more, and for some trifle, a chance word, a smile, a harmless contradiction, he would flare up unexpectedly and make a nuisance of himself to everybody.

"What do we do now?" the Inspector's eyes were asking.

André Lecœur's eyes answered:

"Wait."

It didn't last very long. The emotional crisis waned, started again, then petered out altogether. Olivier shot a sulky look at the Inspector, then hid his face again.

Finally, with an air of bitter resignation, he sat up, and with even a touch of pride, said:

"Fire away. I'll answer."

"At what time last night did you go to Madame Fayet's. . . . Wait a moment. First of all, when did you leave your flat?"

"At eight o'clock, as usual, after François was in bed."

"Nothing exceptional happened?"

"No. We'd had supper together. Then he'd helped me to wash up."

"Did you talk about Christmas?"

"Yes. I told him he'd be getting a surprise."

"The wireless set. Was he expecting one?"

"He'd been longing for one for some time. You see, he doesn't play with the other boys in the street. Practically all his free time he spends at home."

"Did it ever occur to you that the boy might know you'd lost your job at the *Presse*? Did he ever ring you up there?"

"Never. When I'm at work, he's asleep."

"Could anyone have told him?"

"No one knew. Not in the neighbourhood, that is."

"Is he observant?"

"Very. He notices everything."

"You saw him safely in bed, and then you went off. . . . Do you take anything with you—anything to eat, I mean?"

The Inspector suddenly thought of that, seeing Godin produce a ham sandwich. Olivier looked blankly at his empty hands.

"My tin."

"The tin in which you took your sandwiches?"

"Yes. I had it with me when I left. I'm sure of that. I can't think where I could have left it, unless it was at. . . ."

"At Madame Fayet's?"

"Yes."

"Just a moment. . . . Lecœur, get me Javel on the 'phone, will you? . . . Hallo! . . . Who's speaking? . . . Is Janvier there? . . . Good. Ask him to speak to me. . . . Hallo! Is that you, Janvier? . . . Have you come across a tin box containing some sandwiches. . . . Nothing of the sort. Really? . . . All the same, I'd like you to make sure. . . . Ring me back. . . . It's important. . . ."

And, turning again to Olivier:

"Was François actually sleeping when you left?"

"No. But he'd snuggled down in bed and soon would be. . . . Outside, I wandered about for a bit. I walked down to the Seine and waited on the embankment."

"Waited? What for?"

"For François to be fast asleep. From his room you can see Madame Fayet's windows."

"So you'd made up your mind to go and see her."

"It was the only way. I hadn't a bean left."

"What about your brother?"

Olivier and André looked at each other.

"He'd already given me so much. I felt I couldn't ask him again."

"You rang at the house door, I suppose. . . . At what time?"

"A little after nine. The *conciERGE* saw me. I made no attempt to hide—except from François."

"Had your mother-in-law gone to bed?"

"No. She was fully dressed, when she opened her door. She said: Oh, it's you, you wretch! . . ."

"After that beginning did you still think she'd lend you money?"

"I was sure of it."

"Why?"

"It was her business. Perhaps also for the pleasure of squeezing me if I didn't pay her back. She lent me ten thousand francs, but made me sign an I.O.U. for twenty thousand."

"How soon had you to pay her back?"

"In a fortnight's time."

"How could you hope to?"

"I don't know. Somehow. The thing that mattered was for the boy to have a good Christmas."

André Lecœur was tempted to butt in to explain to the puzzled Inspector:

"You see! He's always been like that."

"Did you get the money easily?"

"Oh, no. We were at it for a long time."

"How long?"

"Half an hour, I dare say, and during most of that time she was calling me names; telling me I was no good to anyone and had ruined her daughter's life before I finally killed her! I didn't answer her back. I wanted the money too badly."

"You didn't threaten her?"

Olivier reddened.

"Not exactly. I said if she didn't let me have it I'd kill myself."

"Would you have done it?"

"I don't think so. At least, I don't know. I was fed up, worn out."

"And when you got the money?"

"I walked to the nearest Métro station, Lourmel, and took the underground to Palais Royal. There I went into the Grands Magasins du Louvre. The place was crowded, with queues at many of the counters."

"What time was it?"

"It was after eleven before I left the place. I was in no hurry. I had a good look round. I stood a long time watching a toy electric train."

André couldn't help smiling at the Inspector.

"You didn't miss your sandwich tin?"

"No. I was thinking about François and his present."

"And with money in your pocket you banished all your cares!"

The Inspector hadn't known Olivier Lecœur since childhood, but he had sized him up all right. He had hit the nail on the head. When things were black Olivier would go about with drooping shoulders and a hang-dog air, but no sooner had he a thousand-franc note in his pocket than he'd feel on top of the world.

"To come back to Madame Fayet, you say you gave her a receipt. . . . What did she do with it?"

"She slipped it into an old wallet she always carried about with her in a pocket somewhere under her skirt."

"So you knew about the wallet?"

"Yes. Everybody did."

The Inspector turned towards André.

"It hasn't been found!"

Then to Olivier:

"You bought some things. In the Louvre?"

"No. I bought the wireless-set in the Rue Montmartre."

"In which shop?"

"I don't know the name. It's next door to a shoe shop."

"And the other things?"

"A little further on."

"What time was it when you'd finished shopping?"

"Close on midnight. People were coming out of the theatres and cinemas and crowding into the restaurants. Some of them were rather noisy."

His brother at that time was already here at his switchboard.

"What did you do during the rest of the night?"

"At the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens there's a cinema that stays open all night. . . ."

"You'd been there before?"

Avoiding his brother's eye, he answered rather sheepishly:

"Two or three times. After all, it costs no more than going into a café and you can stay there as long as you like. It's nice and warm. Some people go there regularly to sleep."

"When was it you decided to go to the cinema?"

"As soon as I left Madame Fayet's."

André Lecœur was tempted to intervene once again to say to the Inspector:

"You see, these people who are down and out are not so utterly miserable after all. If they were, they'd never stick it out. They've got a world of their own, in odd corners of which they can take refuge and even amuse themselves."

It was all so like Olivier! With a few notes in his pocket—and Heaven only knew how he was ever going to pay them back—with a few notes in his pocket, his trials were forgotten. He had only one thought: to give his boy a good Christmas. With that secured, he was ready to stand himself a little treat.

So while other families were gathered at table or knelt at Midnight Mass, Olivier went to the cinema all by himself. It was the best he could do.

"When did you leave the cinema?"

"A little before six."

"What was the film?"

"*Cœurs Ardents*. With a documentary on Eskimos."

"How many times did you see the programme?"

"Twice right through, except for the news, which was just coming on again when I left."

André Lecœur knew that all this was going to be verified, if only as a matter of routine. It wasn't necessary, however. Diving into his pockets, Olivier produced the torn-off half of a cinema ticket, then another ticket, a pink one.

"Look at that. It's the Métro ticket I had coming home."

It bore the name of the station Opéra, together with the date and the time.

Olivier had been telling the truth. He couldn't have been in Madame Fayet's flat any time between five and six-thirty.

There was a little spark of triumph in his eye, mixed with a touch of disdain. He seemed to be saying to them all, including his brother:

"Because I'm poor and unlucky I come under suspicion. I know—that's the way things are. I don't blame you."

And, funnily enough, it seemed as though all at once the room had grown colder. That was probably because, with Olivier Lecœur cleared of suspicion, everyone's thoughts reverted to the child. As though moved by one impulse, all eyes turned instinctively towards the huge plan on the wall.

Some time had elapsed since any of the lamps had lit up. Certainly it was a quiet morning. On any ordinary day there would be a street accident coming in every few minutes, particularly old women knocked down in the crowded thoroughfares of Montmartre and other overpopulated quarters.

To-day the streets were almost empty, emptier than in August, when half Paris is away on holiday.

Half-past eleven. For three-and-a-half hours there'd been no sign of François Lecœur.

"Hallo! . . . Yes, Saillard speaking. . . . Is that Janvier? . . . You say you couldn't find a tin anywhere? . . . Except in her kitchen, of course. . . . Now, look here. . . . Was it you who went through the old girl's clothes? . . . Oh, Gonesse had already done it. . . . There should have been an old wallet in a pocket under her skirt. . . . You're sure there wasn't anything of that sort? . . . That's what Gonesse told you, is it? . . . What's that about the *conciERGE*? She saw someone go up a little after nine last night. . . . I know. I know who it was. . . . There were people coming in and out the best part of the night? . . . Of course. . . . I'd like you to go back to the house in the Rue Vasco de Gama. See what you can find out about the comings and goings there, particularly on the third floor. . . . Yes. I'll still be here. . . ."

He turned back to the boy's father, who was now sitting humbly in his chair, looking as intimidated as a patient in a doctor's waiting-room.

"You understand why I asked that, don't you? . . . Does François often wake up in the course of the night?"

"He's been known to get up in his sleep."

"Does he walk about?"

"No. Generally he doesn't even get right out of bed—just sits up and calls out. It's always the same thing. He thinks the house is on fire. His eyes are open, but I don't think he sees anything. Then, little by little, he calms down and with a deep sigh lies down again. The next day he doesn't remember a thing."

"Is he always asleep when you get back in the morning?"

"Not always. But if he isn't he always pretends to be, so that I can wake him up as usual with a hug."

"The people in the house were probably making more noise than usual last night. Who have you got in the next flat?"

"A Czech who works at Renault's."

"Is he married?"

"I really don't know. There are so many people in the house and they change so often we don't know much about them. All I can tell you is that on Sundays other Czechs come there and they sing a lot of their own songs."

"Janvier will tell us whether there was a party there last night. If there was, they may well have woken up the boy. Besides, children are apt to sleep more lightly when they're excited about a present they're expecting. If he got out of bed, he might easily have looked out of the window, in which case he might have seen you at Madame Fayet's. He didn't know she was his grandmother, did he?"

"No. He didn't like her. He sometimes passed her in the street and he used to say she smelt like a squashed bug."

The boy would probably know what he was talking about. A house like his was no doubt infested with vermin.

"He'd have been surprised to see you with her?"

"Certainly."

"Did he know she lent money?"

"Everyone knew."

"Would there be anybody working at the *Presse* on a day like this?"

"There's always somebody there."

The Inspector asked André to ring them up.

"See if anyone's ever been round to ask for your brother."

Olivier looked uncomfortable, but when his brother reached for the telephone directory, he gave him the number. Both he and the Inspector stared at André while he got through.

"It's very important, Mademoiselle. It may even be a matter of life and death. . . . Yes, please. . . . See if you can find out. Ask everybody who's in the building now. . . . What? . . . Yes, I know it's Christmas Day. . . . It's Christmas Day here, too, but we have to carry on just the same!"

Between his teeth he muttered:

"Silly little bitch!"

He could hear the linotypes clicking as he held the line, waiting for her answer.

"Yes. . . . What? . . . Three weeks ago. . . . A young boy. . . ."

Olivier went pale in the face. His eyes dropped, and during the rest of the conversation he stared obstinately at his hands.

"He didn't telephone? . . . Came round himself. . . . At what time? . . . On a Thursday, you say. . . . What did he want? . . . Asked if Olivier Lecœur worked there? . . . What? . . . What was he told?"

Looking up, Olivier saw a flush spread over his brother's face before he banged down the receiver.

"François went there one Thursday afternoon. He must have suspected something. . . . They told him you hadn't been working there for some time."

There was no point in repeating what he had heard. What they'd said to the boy was:

"We chucked the old fool out weeks ago."

Perhaps not out of cruelty. They may not have thought it was the man's son they were speaking to.

"Do you begin to understand, Olivier?"

Did he realise that the situation was the reverse of what he had imagined? He had been going off at night, armed with his little box of sandwiches, keeping up an elaborate pretence. And in the end he had been the one to be taken in!

The boy had found him out. And wasn't it only fair to suppose that he had seen through the Uncle Gédéon story too?

He hadn't said a word. He had simply fallen in with the game.

No one dared say anything, for fear of saying too much, for fear of evoking images that would be heartrending.

A father and a son each lying to avoid hurting the other. . . .

They had to look at it through the eyes of a child, with all childhood's tragic earnestness. His father kisses him good-night and goes off to the job that doesn't really exist, saying:

"Sleep well. . . . There'll be a surprise for you in the morning. . . ."

A wireless-set. It could only be that. And didn't he know that his father's pockets were empty? Did he try to go to sleep? Or did he get up as soon as his father had gone, to sit miserably staring out of the window obsessed by one thought?

His father had no money yet was going to buy him a wireless-set.

To the accompaniment, in all probability, of a full-throated Czech choir singing their national songs on the other side of the thin brick wall!

The Inspector sighed and knocked out his pipe on his heel.

"It looks as though he saw you at Madame Fayet's."

Olivier nodded.

"We'll check up on this, but it seems likely that, looking down from his window, he wouldn't see very far into the room."

"That's quite right."

"Could he have seen you leave the room?"

"No. The door's on the opposite side from the window."

"Do you remember going near the window?"

"At one time I was sitting on the window-sill."

"Was the window open then? We know it was later."

"It was open a few inches. I'm sure of that, because I moved away from it, as I felt an icy draught on my back. She lived with us for a while, just after our marriage, and I know she couldn't bear not to have her window open all the year round. You see, she'd been brought up in the country."

"So there'd be no frost on the panes. He'd certainly have seen you if he was looking."

A call. Lecœur thrust his contact plug into one of the sockets.

"Yes. . . . What's that? . . . A boy? . . ."

The other two held their breath.

"Yes. . . . Yes. . . . What? . . . Yes. Send out the *agents cyclistes*. Comb the whole neighbourhood. I'll see about the station. . . . How long ago was it? . . . Half an hour? . . . Couldn't he have let us know sooner? . . ."

Without losing time over explanations, Lecœur plugged in to the Gare du Nord.

"Hallo! . . . Gare du Nord! Who's speaking? . . . Ah, Lambert. . . . Listen, this is urgent. Have the station searched from end to end. Ask everybody if they've seen a boy of ten wandering about. . . . What? . . . Alone? . . . He may be. . . . Or he may be accompanied. We don't know. . . . Let me know what you find out. . . . Yes, of course. Grab him at once if you set eyes on him. . . ."

"Did you say accompanied?" asked Olivier anxiously.

"Why not? It's possible. Anything's possible. . . . Of course, it may not be him. If it is, we're half an hour late. It was a small grocer in the Rue de Maubeuge whose shop-front is open on to the street. . . . He saw a boy snatch a couple of oranges and make off. . . . He didn't run after him. Only later, when a policeman passed, he thought he might as well mention it. . . ."

"Had your son any money?" asked the Inspector.

"Not a sou."

"Hasn't he got a money-box?"

"Yes. But I borrowed what was in it two days ago, saying that I didn't want to change a banknote."

A pathetic little confession, but what did things like that matter now?

"Don't you think it would be better if I went to the Gare du Nord myself?"

"I doubt if it would help, and we may need you here."

They were almost prisoners in that room. With its direct links with every nerve-centre of Paris, that was the place where any news would first arrive. Even in his room in the *Police Judiciaire*, the Inspector would be less well placed. He had thought of going back there, but now at last took off his overcoat, deciding to see the job through where he was.

"If he had no money, he couldn't take a bus or the Métro. Nor could he go into a café or use a public telephone. He probably hasn't had anything to eat since his supper last night."

"But what can he be doing?" exclaimed Olivier, becoming more and more nervous. "And why should he have sent me to the Gare d'Austerlitz?"

"Perhaps to help you get away," grunted Saillard.

"Get away? Me?"

"Listen. . . . The boy knows you're down and out. Yet you're going to buy him a wireless-set. . . . I'm not reproaching you. I'm just looking at the facts. He leans on the window-sill and sees you with the old woman he knows to be a money-lender. What does he conclude?"

"I see. . . ."

"That you've gone to her to borrow money. He may be touched by it, he may be saddened—we don't know. . . . He goes back to bed and to sleep."

"You think so?"

"I'm pretty sure of it. Anyhow, we've no reason to think he left the house then."

"No. Of course not."

"Let's say he goes back to sleep, then. . . . But he wakes up early, as children mostly do on Christmas Day. . . . And the first thing he notices is the frost on the window. The first frost this winter, don't forget that. He wants to look at it, to touch it. . . ."

A faint smile flickered across André Lecœur's face. This massive Inspector hadn't forgotten what it was like to be a boy.

"He scratched a bit of it away with his nails. . . . It won't be difficult to get confirmation, for once the frost is tampered with it can't form again in quite the same pattern. . . . What does he notice then? . . . That in the buildings opposite one window is lit up, and one only—the window of the room in which a few hours before he had seen his father. It's guess-work, of course, but I don't mind betting he saw the body, or part of it. If he'd merely seen a foot it would have been enough to startle him."

"You mean to say. . . ." began Olivier, wide-eyed.

"That he thought you'd killed her. As I did myself—for a moment. And very likely not her only. Just think for a minute. . . . The man who's been committing all these murders is a man, like you, who wanders about at night. His victims live in the poorer quarters of Paris, like Madame Fayet in the Rue Michat. Does the boy know anything of how you've been spending your nights since you lost your job? No. All that he has to go on is that he has seen you in the murdered woman's room. Would it be surprising if his imagination got to work?"

"You said just now that you sat on the window-sill. Might it be there that you put down your box of sandwiches?"

"Now I come to think of it. . . . Yes. . . . I'm practically sure."

"Then he saw it. . . . And he's quite old enough to know what the police would think when they saw it lying there. . . . Is your name on it?"

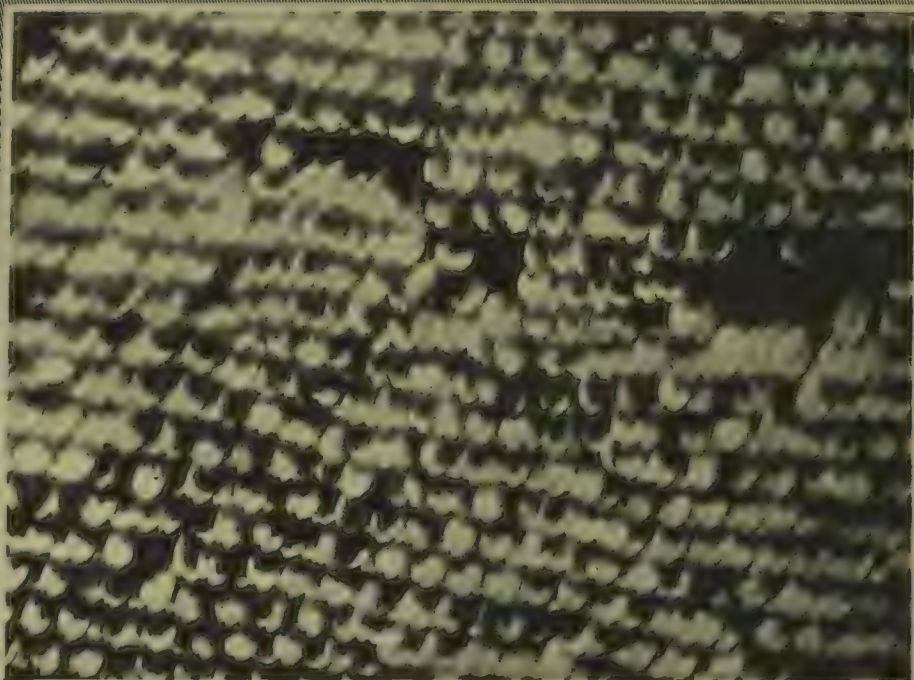
"Yes. Scratched on the lid."

"You see! He thought you'd be coming home as usual between seven and eight. The thing was to get you as quickly as possible out of the danger zone."

"You mean. . . . By writing me that note?"

"Yes. He didn't know what to say. He couldn't refer to the murder without compromising you. Then he thought of Uncle Gédéon. Whether he believed in his existence or not doesn't matter."

[Continued on page 37.]



THE MEDIUM WHICH M. DUPLAN USES TO "PAINT" HIS FLOWER PIECES REPRODUCED IN COLOUR OPPOSITE: A MICROPHOTOGRAPH OF A BUTTERFLY'S WING, SHOWING SCALES.

ON our facing page we reproduce greatly enlarged reproductions in colour of remarkable "paintings" of flowers in butterfly-wing scales, made without the use of any other pigment. On this page we give photographs illustrating the method by which M. Anatole Duplan, the artist, "paints" these pictures and the tools he uses. He is aged 75, and as a boy worked on the land. He was subsequently apprenticed to a blacksmith; then became a hairdresser, and finally settled down as a designer of horse carriages, a series of occupations which would hardly seem to lead naturally to becoming a master of the art of making microscopic "paintings" with butterfly-wing scales. However, all his life M. Duplan has been attracted by anything demanding exceptional skill of eye and hand, and when he

(Continued below.)



M. DUPLAN AT THE MICROMANIPULATOR HE BUILT: THE RIGHT HAND WORKS THE PIG'S EYELASH THROUGH A SYSTEM OF CAM SHAFTS TO MINIMISE MOVEMENT, THE LEFT MOVES THE GLASS SLIDE; PHIALS CONTAINING BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES IN FOREGROUND.

HOW THE ARTIST "PAINTS" HIS MICROSCOPIC PICTURES IN BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES: OPERATING A PIG'S EYELASH THROUGH A MINIMISING MOVEMENT DEVICE.

saw reproductions of microscopic "paintings" in butterfly-wing scales made by the late Dr. Dalton he decided to try his hand at this unusual art. After two years of experiments he achieved the necessary skill, and his work is now described as being smaller and more exact than that of the late Dr. Dalton. In order to handle the butterfly-wing scales he uses a pig's eyelash, the finest and yet the strongest tool he has been able to find. He sorts the butterfly-wing scales, according to shape, colour and size and stores them in phials. He then puts a drop of special transparent glue on to a microscope slide. Each scale must be picked up by means of the pig's eyelash attached to a complicated system of cam shafts of M. Duplan's



THE ACTUAL SIZE OF A "PREPARATION": THE TINY WHITE SPOT IS A "PICTURE" AND MUST BE VIEWED THROUGH A MICROSCOPE.



INSPECTING A "PREPARATION" THROUGH HIS HOME-MADE MICROSCOPE; M. DUPLAN, WHO IS BELIEVED TO BE THE ONLY LIVING EXPONENT OF HIS ART.

invention—which minimises movement—and placed, dull side upwards, on to the slide, according to the planned design. When the picture is complete it is put in a warm oven to dry the glue. Then it is mounted on a slide with a black background, which enables the brilliant colours of the scales to show up. The colour-effect of each composition must be judged by guesswork. It takes from 12 to 15 hours to complete a "picture" or "preparation," as M. Duplan calls them, and each must be finished in a sitting as the glue must not dry till the work is completed. The size of a "preparation" or "picture" is 1mm. square, and it is viewed through a microscope.



"PAINTED" IN THE RADIANT DUST OF BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES: A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS AND FOLIAGE IN A CRYSTAL VASE. ITS ACTUAL SIZE IS ABOUT 2 MILLIMETRES HIGH.

The name *Lepidoptera*, used in zoological classification for the order of insects which comprises butterflies and moths, is derived from the Greek words meaning "a scale" and "a wing." It was first used by Linnæus (1735), and has been retained by all naturalists after him. The wings, body and appendages of all the *Lepidoptera* are



A BASKET OF FLOWERS, "PAINTED" IN BRILLIANTLY-COLOURED BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES WITH A PIG'S EYELASH OPERATED BY A COMPLICATED SYSTEM OF LEVERS OF THE ARTIST'S OWN INVENTION.

covered with minute scales which come off as dust if the insects are handled. It is these microscopic and brilliantly-coloured scales which clothe the wings of butterflies in their varied and glorious range of colour and pattern, and it is this radiant dust which M. Anatole Duplan uses as the medium for the production of his remarkable

(Continued from page 16)



ILLUSTRATING THE SKILL WITH WHICH M. DUPLAN PRODUCES HIS MICROSCOPIC "PAINTINGS" IN BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES: A CORNUCOPIA CONTAINING FUCHSIAS AND OTHER FLOWERS.



FLOWERS, BIRDS AND DRAGONFLIES IN BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES: ONE OF M. DUPLAN'S MICROSCOPIC "PAINTINGS" WHICH HE MOUNTS ON SLIDES. OUR REPRODUCTIONS SHOW THEM ENLARGED OVER 3000 TIMES.

"PAINTINGS" IN BUTTERFLY-WING SCALES—ENLARGED OVER 3000 TIMES.

Continued.

flower "paintings" mounted on ordinary microscopic slides. Our reproductions show the extreme delicacy of these flower "pictures," but, in looking at them, it must be borne in mind that in our reproductions the areas of the "paintings" are over 3000 times those of the originals. The flower-pieces are designed to be studied

through a microscope. Such a medium presents problems for the artist who sets out to use it, and M. Duplan has evolved a remarkable technique illustrated and explained on another page. Special tools have had to be devised, and he uses a pig's eyelash attached to a complicated lever to pick up the tiny scales.



"BLIND MAN'S BUFF", ATTRIBUTED TO HUBERT ROBERT (1733-1808).

The high spirits of youth radiate from this painting, attributed to Hubert Robert, which depicts eighteenth-century gallants and beauties enjoying a game of "Blind Man's Buff" in a setting of decorative classical ruins and trees. Hubert Robert, who studied in Rome and was a friend of Fragonard, was influenced by Pannini and by his passion for the remains of antiquity. He

was famous for his landscapes with ruins and views—fantastic or realistic—of Paris. He also designed gardens, and was the first director of the museum which later became the Musée du Louvre. The painting we reproduce was shown at the Arts Council Exhibition of "Landscape in French Art" at the Royal Academy Galleries 1949-50.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Musée de Picardie, Amiens.



"THE DOG'S EDUCATION", BY FRANÇOIS BOUCHER (1703-1770).

This delightful painting is an example of François Boucher's rustic pastoral manner. He produced a number of such subjects, which are among his finest works. Boucher enjoyed a brilliant career at the Court of Louis XV. He was Professor of Drawing to Mme. de Pompadour, Director of the Beauvais Factory, and in 1765 became First

Painter to the King. He painted several enchanting portraits of Mme. de Pompadour, but is best known for his decorative mythological work, delicately sensuous in style. The painting which we reproduce was shown in the Arts Council "Landscape in French Art" Exhibition at the Royal Academy Galleries, 1949-50.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Musée de Nîmes.



AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY COQUETTE.

In the eighteenth century the fan was regarded as the feminine sceptre, and the elegant and witty Frenchwoman of the period used it with supreme grace. It added point to her conversational sallies, helped to draw attention to the beauty of her hands, and could be used to hide blushes—real or simulated—should an admirer prove too venturesome. In addition, it provided endless

opportunities for the display of coquetry, and furthermore, displeasure could be indicated by its manipulation and it could snub or encourage with equal delicacy. Our reproduction is a contemporary drawing in the style of the famous French Court painter, François Boucher (1703-1770). It is published by Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.



All the other little bulls he lived with would run and jump and butt their heads together, but not Ferdinand. He liked to sit just quietly and smell the

flowers. He had a favourite spot out in the pasture under a cork tree. It was his favourite tree, and he would sit in its shade all day and smell the flowers.

[Continued overleaf.]

THE STORY OF FERDINAND THE BULL.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT LAWSON, SELECTED FROM THE BOOK "THE STORY OF FERDINAND," BY MUNRO LEAF (HAMISH HAMILTON).

"The Story of Ferdinand," by Munro Leaf, illustrated by Robert Lawson, is one of the most amusing children's books ever written. It was first published in 1937 by

Hamish Hamilton. We feel sure that our readers will appreciate the tale and the selection of drawings which we reproduce on this and the following pages.



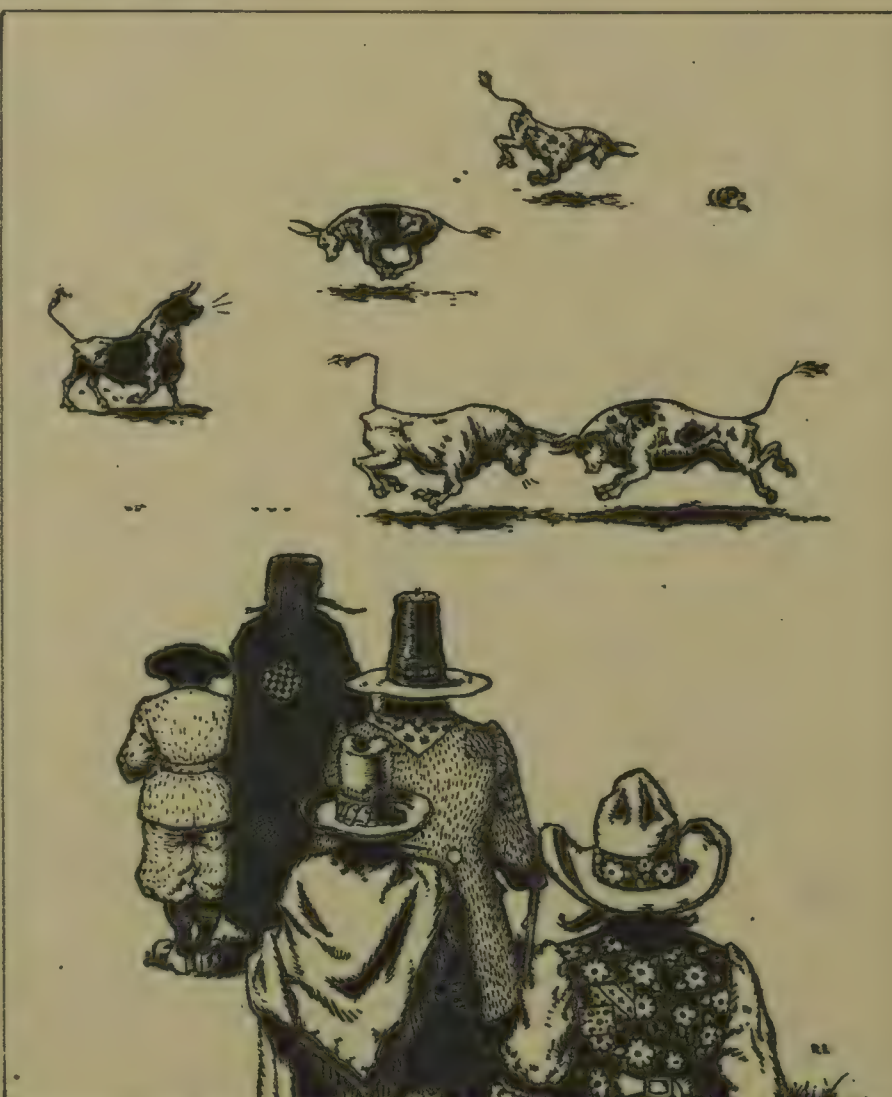
Sometimes his mother, who was a cow, would worry about him. She was afraid he would be lonely all by himself. "Why don't you run and play with the other little bulls and skip and butt your head?" she would say. But Ferdinand would shake his head. "I like it



better here where I can sit just quietly and smell the flowers." His mother saw that he was not lonely, and because she was an understanding mother, even though she was a cow, she let him just sit there and be happy.



As the years went by Ferdinand grew and grew until he was very big and strong. All the other bulls who had grown up with him in the same pasture would fight each other all day. They would butt each other and stick each other with their horns. What they wanted most of all was to be picked to fight at the bull-fights in Madrid. But not Ferdinand—



he still liked to sit just quietly under the cork tree and smell the flowers. One day five men came in very funny hats to pick the biggest, fastest, roughest bull to fight in the bull-fights in Madrid. All the other bulls ran around snorting and butting, leaping and jumping so the men would think that they were very, very strong and fierce and pick them.

[Continued on page 31.]

THE STORY OF FERDINAND THE BULL.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT LAWSON, SELECTED FROM THE BOOK "THE STORY OF FERDINAND," BY MUNRO LEAF (HAMISH HAMILTON).



"COTTAGES BESIDE A RIVER" ; BY FRANÇOIS BOUCHER (1703-1770).

The work of François Boucher, Court painter to Louis XV., was greatly appreciated by Mme. de Pompadour, and his decorative paintings are closely associated with her. He produced many pastoral and rustic scenes, portraits, allegorical and historical subjects, but his landscapes are comparatively rare. The example which we reproduce was painted about 1753, at the height of Boucher's fame, and is sometimes called "Le Moulin de Charenton." Boucher went to Italy in 1723 with Carle van Løo (whom he succeeded as First Painter to the King in 1765) and did not return to Paris until 1731, where he gained an immediate success, and in 1734 was admitted into the Academy. "Cottages Beside a River" was seen in last winter's Arts Council "Landscape in French Art" exhibition at Burlington House.

Reproduced by Courtesy of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orléans.



DOMESTIC LIFE IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HOLLAND.

"A PRESENT FOR A GOOD GIRL"; BY JACOB OCHTERVELT (1635-1700). This Dutch interior, showing a young mother and her little girl, by Jacob Ochtervelt, an artist who formed his style on those of Metsu and Terborch, makes a charming pair to the English domestic Conversation Piece by Zoffany reproduced on our facing page, though it is a century earlier in date. It depicts a scene of peaceful domesticity in 17th-Century Holland. It was included in the exhibition of Dutch and Flemish Masters, 1950, at Slatter's Gallery in Old Bond Street.

Reproduced by Courtesy of Sir Robert Mayer.



DOMESTIC LIFE IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND.

"THE VISIT TO GRANDMOTHER"; BY JOHN ZOFFANY, R.A. (1733-1810).

John Zoffany, who was born in Rotterdam, worked in England, Italy and India. The Royal Collection contains numerous groups by him of George III., Queen Charlotte and their children, as well as his celebrated "Life School at the Royal Academy." The Conversation Piece which we reproduce might well represent a Christmas-morning scene, when family greetings and reunions are specially joyful.

Reproduced by Courtesy of Messrs. Arthur Tooth and Sons.



"THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERANCE", BY JAN STEEN (1626-1679): A MASTERPIECE OF DUTCH PAINTING TO POINT A MORAL AND ADORN A WALL.

Paintings in which the artist has set out to point a moral, or tell a story, do not always succeed as works of art, but this fine and well-documented work by Jan Steen, one of the greatest of the Dutch seventeenth-century painters, undoubtedly does so. The domestic disasters consequent on too much feasting are recorded with wit, humour and a notable absence of coarseness, and are combined into a thoroughly satisfying composition. It was included in the Exhibition of Dutch and Flemish Masters, 1950, at Slatter's Gallery, Old Bond Street.

REPRODUCED BY COURTESY OF THE OWNER, MR. PERCY B. MEYER.



"AT THE FIRST STROKE OF THE CLOCK THE KINGS, QUEENS AND KNAVES LEAPT OUT OF THEIR CARDS WITH A SOFT SWISHING NOISE AND THEY ALL SORTED THEMSELVES OUT, FOR THEY HAD BEEN PUT AWAY SHUFFLED UP ANYHOW." THE OLD PACK OF CARDS HAD BEEN HIDDEN IN A DRAWER FOR YEARS, BUT, JUST, IN TIME, ON CHRISTMAS EVE, THEY WERE FOUND BY A CHILD, AND PLAYED WITH, SO THEY COULD COME TO THE PARTY.



MISS ANGELINA ROBINSON, THE MUSICAL DOLL, DELIGHTED THE GUESTS WITH A MOST SPIRITED SPANISH DANCE, AND AS AN ENCORE GAVE A MOZART AIR ON TWO GLASS TRUMPETS.

THE CHILDREN'S TOYS GIVE THEIR OWN CHRISTMAS PARTY: A DOLLS'

ONCE a year, while the clock is striking midnight on Christmas Eve, all the children's toys come to life and entertain each other at a wonderful party. It may not seem very long to you—the time between the first, and the last, stroke of midnight—but you must remember that toys have no sense of time, so it is quite a long while to them. There is only one condition that all must fulfil to be present at the entertainment, and that is, that each guest has been played with by his or her owner during the preceding year. All the cards in the old pack were delighted at last to be eligible as guests, for they had lain, forgotten, at the back of a drawer for many years, but just in time on Christmas Eve they were found. A hand opened the little drawer where they were, and they all shuffled with anticipation as they blinked in the unaccustomed light. "Oh! What funny old cards," a little girl cried, and she ran to her friends, and they immediately played a most exciting game of "Beggar-my-Neighbour." The cards were very pleased to be used again. At the first stroke of the clock the Kings, Queens and Knaves leapt out of their cards with a soft swishing noise, and they all sorted themselves out, for they had been put away shuffled up anyhow. The gentle, placid Queen of Hearts rushed to the King of Hearts, delighted to be away from the Ace of Spades, which had been muttering grim remarks to itself in the darkness. The Knave of Spades and the Knave of Clubs immediately started a duel, much to the apparent distress of the Queen of Spades and the Queen of Clubs; each of whom secretly hoped that the fight was over her, although the truth was that neither duellist really knew or remembered what they were quarrelling about, for the dispute had started long, long ago—during a game of piquet. It was most difficult for them to fight at all, because if one turned sideways he became invisible, so that although the duel lasted throughout the party, neither participant came to the slightest harm, though both grew giddy and exhausted trying to keep each other in sight. Miss Angelina Robinson, the musical doll, delighted all the guests with a most spirited Spanish dance, clicking her castanets with the utmost bravoure and displaying her white-and-blue satin costume to great advantage. As an encore and in response to the enthusiastic applause, she played Mozart's *Rondo alla*



THE TWO DOLLS, BILL AND BELLE, WERE OTHER GUESTS AT THE PARTY. THEY "PERFORMED SOME REALLY ASTONISHING ACROBATICS ON THE CHANDELIER. THEY DID 'NOT' NEED ANY MUSIC TO ACCOMPANY THEM, AS BILL VERY CLEVERLY KICKED THE GLASS DROPS WITH HIS CHINA FEET AS IT SWUNG TO AND FRO, AND THIS MADE A DELIGHTFUL TUNE. UNFORTUNATELY BELLE CUT HERSELF ON THE SHARP EDGE OF A BROKEN LUSTRE AND LOST QUITE A LOT OF SANDUST . . ."

Turca on no fewer than two glass trumpets. She had no idea of the name of the piece or the composer, but the craftsman who made her had hummed it all the time he was at work, so that the tune was almost part of her. She couldn't yet it quite right, as the old man had been slightly tone-deaf, but all the guests agreed that she played with the greatest *verve*. When the applause had died down, the two dolls, Bill and Belle, performed some really astonishing acrobatics on the chandelier. They did not need any music to accompany them, as Bill very cleverly kicked the glass drops with his china feet as it swung to and fro, and this made a delightful tune. Unfortunately Belle cut herself on the sharp edge of a broken lustre and lost quite a lot of sandust, but after a short rest was able to rejoin the guests. Much comment was caused by the two automations, as nobody could decide who they were. The oldest doll present, who had been made in the eighteenth century in France, declared that the Chef had come *en travesti* as the Gilles of Watteau. To confirm this she declared that she had been actually present when Watteau painted the picture, although this statement was regarded with some scepticism. Someone else, a Chinese Mandarin, remembered that a hare was believed in his country to live in the moon and to gather the herbs of immortality there, and that Gilles could only be seen in moonlight, his satin suit 'sally gleaming'. The Dutch Doll made an acid comment on the condition of the Chef's sauceman, which she said was too dirty to be tolerated in *er* country, but this remark was rather unpopular, as most of the toys were far from clean and new, so no one was sorry when she screamed with fright as the lid of the sauceman slowly opened, as if by magic, and there peeped out a small, white face, the ghost of all the little animals the Chef had cooked. He couldn't see it, of course, as he was too busy listening to the soft, sad waltz which thrilled in his own inside. The Hare Herbwoman was listening, with her ears -ricked, to her own tune, and in her turn did not notice that her basket was opening too. But was no ghost which lived there, but a charming iten which turned its head from side to side and mewed so quietly that no one could hear it.

Specially painted for "The Illustrated London News" by Martin Dunsford to illustrate his own story.



THE CHEF AND THE HARE HERB WOMAN. NO ONE QUITE KNEW WHO THESE AUTOMATONS WERE, BUT THE OLDEST DOLL PRESENT DECLARED THAT THE CHEF HAD COME *EN TRAVESTI* AS THE GILLES OF WATTEAU.

CARNIVAL BETWEEN THE FIRST, AND THE LAST, STROKE OF MIDNIGHT.



"AN EXPERIMENT WITH THE AIR PUMP": BY JOSEPH WRIGHT OF DERBY (1734-1797), AN ARTIST WHOSE PAINTINGS ILLUSTRATE THE POPULAR INTEREST OF THE PERIOD IN SCIENCE. [Reproduced by Courtesy of the Trustees of the Tate Gallery.]



"THE ORRERY": BY JOSEPH WRIGHT OF DERBY (1734-1797), A GROUP SHOWING THE EXCITEMENT OF LITTLE BOYS ON HEARING THE EXPLANATION OF A CLOCK-WORK MODEL OF THE PLANETARY SYSTEM. [Reproduced by Courtesy of the Museum and Art Gallery, Wardwick, Derby.]

SCIENCE WITHOUT TEARS IN THE 18TH CENTURY: CHILDREN AGOG WITH WONDER.

Joseph Wright of Derby, who was particularly interested in the effects of candlelight, painted a number of subjects which illustrate the eighteenth-century preoccupation with what was then called "natural philosophy." Those which we reproduce show young people making their first acquaintance

with science, and illustrate how boys and girls of the period enjoyed watching experiments and learning the elements of astronomy just as keenly as children of the present day relish visits to the Science Museum during the Christmas holidays and learning "how the wheels go round."



Ferdinand knew that they wouldn't pick him, and he didn't care. So he went out to his favourite cork tree to sit down. He didn't look where he was sitting, and instead of sitting on the nice cool



grass in the shade he sat on a bumble bee. Well, if you were a bumble bee and a bull sat on you, what would you do? You would sting him. And that is just what this bee did to Ferdinand.



Wow! Did it hurt! Ferdinand jumped up with a snort. He ran around puffing and snorting, butting and pawing the ground as if he were mad. The five men saw him and they all shouted with joy. Here was the largest and fiercest bull of all. Just the one for the bull-fights in Madrid! So they took him away for the bull-fight day in a cart. What a day it was! Flags were flying, bands were playing . . . and all the lovely ladies had flowers in their hair. They had a parade into the bull-ring. First came the Banderilleros with long sharp pins with ribbons on them to stick in the bull and make him



angry. Next came the Picadores who rode skinny horses, and they had long spears to stick in the bull and make him angrier. Then came the Matador, the proudest of all—he thought he was very handsome, and bowed to the ladies. He had a red cape and a sword, and was supposed to stick the bull last of all. Then came the bull, and you know who that was, don't you?—Ferdinand. They called him Ferdinand the Fierce, and all the Banderilleros were afraid of him and the Picadores were afraid of him and the Matador was scared stiff.

[Continued overleaf.]

THE STORY OF FERDINAND THE BULL.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT LAWSON, SELECTED FROM THE BOOK "THE STORY OF FERDINAND," BY MUNRO LEAF (HAMISH HAMILTON).



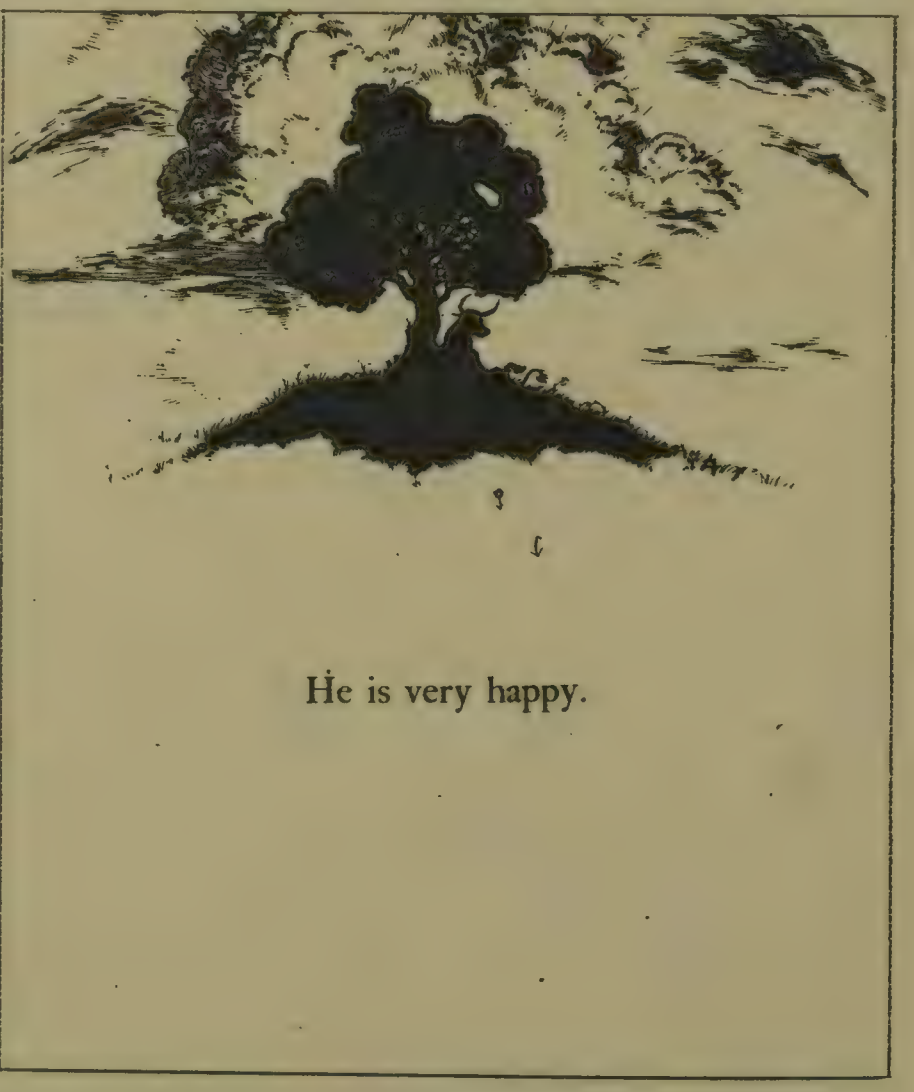
Ferdinand ran to the middle of the ring, and everyone shouted and clapped because they thought he was going to fight fiercely and butt and snort and stick his horns around. But not Ferdinand. When he got to the middle of the ring he saw the flowers in all the lovely ladies' hair, and he



just sat down quietly and smelled. He wouldn't fight and be fierce no matter what they did. He just sat and smelled. And the Banderilleros were angry and the Picadores were angrier and the Matador was so angry he cried because he couldn't show off with his cape and sword.



So they had to take Ferdinand home.



He is very happy.

THE STORY OF FERDINAND THE BULL.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT LAWSON, SELECTED FROM THE BOOK "THE STORY OF FERDINAND," BY MUNRO LEAF (HAMISH HAMILTON).

And for all I know he is sitting there still, under his favourite cork tree, smelling the flowers just quietly. He is very happy.



"THE NATIVITY," BY FEDERIGO BAROCCI (1528-1612).

The earth, it is traditionally held, was at peace on that December night between nineteen hundred and two thousand years ago when the Prince of Peace was born in the Bethlehem stable. Though strife and discord divide the world to-day, the promise of Christmas still inspires the faithful, as it did when Barocci painted his "Nativity," which now hangs in the Ambrosiana Gallery, Milan.

From a Rinascimento Print of Roberto Hoesch, Milan.



"HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF DEVONSHIRE," WIFE OF THE FIFTH DUKE: AN ENGRAVING BY FRANCESCO BARTOLOZZI, R.A. (1725-1815), AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A. (D. 1824).



"MRS. SIDDONS," THE FAMOUS TRAGIC ACTRESS, DAUGHTER OF ROGER KEMBLE AND SARAH KEMBLE (NÉE WARD): AN ENGRAVING BY P. W. TOMKINS, LATE PUPIL OF FRANCESCO BARTOLOZZI, AFTER A DRAWING BY JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A.



"LADY DUNCANNON": AN ENGRAVING BY FRANCESCO BARTOLOZZI, R.A., AFTER AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY JOHN DOWNMAN MADE FOR THE SCENERY AT RICHMOND HOUSE, WHERE AMATEUR STAGE PERFORMANCES WERE HELD.



"MISS FARREN," THE FAMOUS COMEDIENNE, LATER COUNTESS OF DERBY: AN ENGRAVING BY MR. COLLYER FROM A DRAWING BY JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A., FOR THE SCENERY AT RICHMOND HOUSE.

BEAUTIES OF THE LATE GEORGIAN ERA: AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY QUARTETTE.

The engravings, after drawings by John Downman, A.R.A. (d. 1824), reproduced on this page, illustrate the types of beauty most admired in the late eighteenth century. The portraits of the Duchess of Devonshire, Lady Duncannon and Miss Farren were made for the scenery at Richmond House, Whitehall, the mansion of the Duke of Richmond, where Miss Farren, the celebrated actress, was wont to preside over a series of amateur stage performances. Elizabeth Farren (1759?-1829) married the twelfth Earl of Derby in 1797, and on the day of her wedding Mrs. Siddons, the famous tragic actress, consented to speak at Drury Lane some lines on "the loss of our

comic muse." Hazlitt refers to "Miss Farren, with her fine-lady airs and graces, with that elegant turn of her head and motion of her fan and tripping of her tongue," and Walpole considered her the most perfect actress he had ever seen. The Duchess of Devonshire portrayed was the wife of the fifth Duke and was famous for her beauty. She was Georgiana, daughter of John, Earl Spencer. Mrs. Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), eldest child of Roger Kemble and Sarah Kemble (née Ward), was one of the world's most famous tragic actresses, and her great rôles included Lady Macbeth and Zara in "The Mourning Bride."

Reproduced by Courtesy of P. and D. Colnàghi.



"A LITTLE INSTRUCTION FROM AUNTIE."

A WATER-COLOUR DRAWING BY JOHN DOWNMAN, A.R.A. (c. 1750-1824).

The inscription on the back of this water-colour, made by Downman in 1781, indicates that the sitters are aunt and nephew, for the lady is Miss D. Hall, sister of Mary Lawrence, *née* Hall, wife of Richard James Lawrence, father of the boy Charles Lawrence. Charles grew up and became the father of General Sir Arthur Lawrence of Fox Hills, and the drawing was formerly in the Fox Hills collection, Chertsey. A drawing by Downman of Mrs. Mary Lawrence is in the National Gallery of Canada. Downman, who studied under West and in the Royal Academy Schools, became an A.R.A. in 1793.



"SOLOMON"; BY EUGÈNE KASSESSINOFF, COURT PAINTER TO H.M. THE KING OF EGYPT.

This decorative painting by Eugène Kassessinoff illustrates the words of Ecclesiastes 2, 11 : "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do ; and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit and there was no profit

under the sun." Solomon is represented as seeing in a vision Love and Wine, Military Glory and Discovery, Wealth and Might, Greed and Desire, Calamity and Murder, and finding all but a cloud, a dissolving vapour.



"NARCOTIC DREAMS"; BY EUGÈNE KASSESSINOFF, COURT PAINTER TO H.M. THE KING OF EGYPT.

Eugène Kassessinoff, born in Kharkov, travelled as a child with his parents in far-eastern Russia, Mongolia and Japan, and left Russia with the White Army in 1920, after which he settled in Cairo, and in 1938 was appointed Miniaturist to the King of Egypt. This painting,

which, like that of Solomon, was exhibited in London at the Egyptian Education Bureau in 1948, depicts the dreams of a girl under narcotics. She sees her beloved killed in battle, and now in the power of the Queen of Death, and has visions of her own terrible fate.

WISDOM AND BEAUTY "DREAMING WHEN DAWN'S LEFT HAND WAS IN THE SKY."

THE SEVEN CROSSES—Continued from page 15.

He knew you'd go to the Gare d'Austerlitz."

"But he's not yet eleven!"

"Boys of that age know a lot more than you think. Doesn't he read detective stories?"

"Yes."

"Of course, he does. They all do. If they don't read them, they get them on the radio. Perhaps that's why he wanted a wireless-set so badly."

"It's true."

"He couldn't stay in the flat to wait for you, for he had something more important to do. He had to get hold of that box. . . . I suppose he knew the courtyard well. . . . He'd played there, hadn't he?"

"At one time, yes. . . . With the *concierge's* little girl."

"So he'd know about the rainwater pipes, may even have climbed up them for sport."

"Very well," said Olivier, suddenly calm, "let's say he gets into the room and takes the box. He wouldn't need to climb down the way he'd come. He could simply walk out of the flat and out of the house. You can open the house door from inside without knocking up the *concierge*. . . . You say it was at about six o'clock, don't you?"

"I see what you're driving at," grunted the Inspector. "Even at a leisurely pace it would hardly have taken him two hours to walk to the Gare d'Austerlitz. Yet he wasn't there. . . ."

Leaving them to thrash it out, André Lecœur was busy telephoning.

"No news yet!"

And the man at the Gare du Nord answered:

"Nothing so far. We've pounced on any number of boys, but none of them was François Lecœur."

Admittedly any street-boy could have pinched a couple of oranges and taken to his heels. The same couldn't be said for the broken glass of the telephone pillars, however. André Lecœur looked once again at the column with the seven crosses, as though some clue might suddenly emerge from them. He had never thought himself much cleverer than his brother. Where he scored was in patience and perseverance.

"If the box of sandwiches is ever found it'll be at the bottom of the Seine near the Pont Mirabeau," he said.

Steps in the corridor. On an ordinary day they would not have been noticed, but in the stillness of a Christmas morning everyone listened.

It was an *agent cycliste*, who produced a bloodstained blue check handkerchief, the one that had been found among the glass splinters at the seventh telephone pillar.

"That's his all right," said the boy's father.

"He must have been followed," said the Inspector. "If he'd had time, he wouldn't merely have broken the glass. He'd have said something."

"Who by?" asked Olivier, who was the only one not to understand.

"Who'd want to follow him? And why should he call the police?"

They hesitated to put him wise. In the end it was his brother who explained:

"When he went to the old woman's he thought you were the murderer. When he came away he knew you weren't. He knew. . . ."

"Knew what?"

"He knew who was. Do you understand now? He found out something, though we don't know what. He wants to tell us about it, but someone's stopping him."

"You mean?"

"I mean that François is after the murderer or the murderer after him. One is following, one is followed—we don't know which. By the way, Inspector, is there a reward offered?"

"A handsome reward was offered after the third murder and it was doubled last week. It's been in all the papers."

"Then my guess," said André Lecœur, "is that it's the kid who's doing the following. Only in that case. . . ."

It was twelve o'clock, four hours since they'd lost track of him. Unless, of course, it was he who had snaffled the oranges in the Rue Maubeuge. . . .

IV.

Might not this be his great moment? André Lecœur had read somewhere that even to the dullest and most uneventful lives such a moment comes sooner or later.

He had never had a particularly high opinion of himself or of his abilities. When people asked him why he'd chosen so dreary and monotonous a job rather than one in, say, the *Brigade des Homicides*, he would answer:

"I suppose I'm lazy."

Sometimes he would add:

"I'm scared of being knocked about."

As a matter of fact he was neither lazy nor a coward. If he lacked anything it was brains.

He knew it. All he had learnt at school had cost him a great effort. The police exams, that others took so easily in their stride, he had only passed by dint of perseverance.

Was it a consciousness of his own shortcomings that had kept him single? Possibly. It seemed to him that the sort of woman he would want to marry would be his superior, and he didn't relish the idea of playing second fiddle in the home.

But he wasn't thinking of all this now. Indeed, if this was his moment of greatness, it was stealing upon him unawares.

Another team arrived, those of the second day-shift, looking very fresh and well-groomed in their Sunday clothes. They had been celebrating Christmas in their families, and they brought in with them, as it were, a whiff of good viands and liqueurs.

Old Bedeau had taken his place at the switchboard, but Lecœur

made no move to go.

"I'll stay on a bit," he said simply.

Inspector Saillard had gone for a quick lunch at the Brasserie Dauphine, just round the corner, leaving strict injunctions that he was to be fetched at once if anything happened. Janvier was back at the Quai des Orfèvres, writing up his report.

If Lecœur was tired, he didn't notice it. He certainly wasn't sleepy and couldn't bear the thought of going home to bed. He had plenty of stamina. Once, when there were riots in the Place de la Concorde, he had done thirty-six hours non-stop, and on another occasion, during a general strike, they had all camped in the room for four days and nights.

His brother showed the strain more. He was getting jumpy again.

"I'm going," he announced suddenly.

"Where to?"

"To find Bib."

"Where?"

"I don't know exactly. . . . I'll start round the Gare du Nord."

"How do you know it was Bib who stole the oranges? He may be at the other end of Paris. We might get news at any minute. You'd better stay."

"I can't stand this waiting."

He was nevertheless persuaded to. He was given a chair in a corner. He refused to lie down. His eyes were red with anxiety and fatigue. He sat fidgeting, looking rather as, when a boy, he had been put in the corner.

With more self-control, André forced himself to take some rest. Next to the big room, was a little one with a wash-basin, where they hung their coats and which was provided with a couple of camp beds on which the *nuileux* could lie down during a quiet hour.

He shut his eyes, but only for a moment. Then his hand felt for the little notebook which never left him, and lying on his back he began to turn over the pages.

There were nothing but crosses, columns and columns of tiny little crosses which, month after month, year after year he had accumulated, Heaven knows why. Just to satisfy something inside him. After all, other people keep a diary, or the most meticulous household accounts even when they don't need to economise at all.

Those crosses told the story of the night life of Paris.

"Some coffee, Lecœur?"

"Thanks."

Feeling rather out of touch where he was, he dragged his camp bed into the big room, placing it in a position from which he could see the wall-plan. There he sipped his coffee, after which he stretched himself out again, sometimes studying his notebook, sometimes lying with his eyes shut. Now and again he stole a glance at his brother, who sat huddled on his chair, with drooping shoulders, the twitching of his long, white fingers being the only sign of the torture he was enduring.

There were hundreds of men now, not only in Paris but in the suburbs, keeping their eyes skinned for the boy whose description had been circulated. Sometimes false hopes were raised, only to be dashed when the exact particulars were given.

Lecœur shut his eyes again, but opened them suddenly next moment, as though he had actually dozed off. He glanced at the clock, then looked round for the Inspector.

"Hasn't Saillard got back yet," he asked, getting to his feet.

"I expect he's looked in at the Quai des Orfèvres."

Olivier stared at his brother, surprised to see him pacing up and down the room. The latter was so absorbed in his thoughts that he hardly noticed that the sun had broken through the clouds, bathing Paris on that Christmas afternoon in a glow of light more like that of spring.

While thinking he listened, and it wasn't long before he heard Inspector Saillard's heavy tread outside.

"You'd better go and get some sandwiches," he said to his brother. "Get some for me, too."

"What kind?"

"Ham. Anything. Whatever you find."

Olivier went out, after a parting glance at the map, relieved, in spite of his anxiety, to be doing something.

The men of the afternoon shift knew little of what was afoot, except that the killer had done another job the previous night, and that there was a general hunt for a small boy. For them, the case couldn't have the flavour it had for those who were involved. At the switchboard, Bedeau was doing a crossword with his earphones on his head, breaking off from time to time for the classic:

"Hallo! Austerlitz. . . . Your car's out."

A body fished out of the Seine. You couldn't have a Christmas without that!

"Could I have a word with you, Inspector?"

The camp bed was back in the cloakroom. It was there that Lecœur led the chief of the homicide squad. The Inspector took off his overcoat, filled his pipe, and looked at the other with a certain curiosity.

"I hope you won't mind my butting in. . . . I know it isn't for me to make suggestions. . . . But, about the killer. . . ."

He had his little notebook in his hand. He must have known its contents almost by heart, and if he made a show of consulting it, it was probably to cover his embarrassment.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking since this morning, and. . . ."

A little while ago, while he was lying down, it had seemed so clear, but now that he had to explain things, it was difficult to put them in logical order.

"It's like this. . . . First of all, I noticed that all the murders were committed after two in the morning, most of them after three. . . ."

He could see by the look on the Inspector's face that he hadn't exactly scored a hit, and he hurried on:

"I've been looking up the times of other murders over the past three years. They were nearly always between ten in the evening and two in the morning."

Neither did that observation seem to make much impression. Why not take the bull by the horns and say straight out what was on his mind?

"Just now, looking at my brother, it occurred to me that the man you're looking for might be a man like him. As a matter of fact I, too, for a moment wondered whether it wasn't him. . . . Wait a moment. . . ."

That was better. The look of polite boredom had gone from Saillard's face.

"If I'd had more experience in this sort of work I'd be able to explain myself better. . . . But you'll see in a moment. . . . A man who's killed eight people one after the other is, if not a madman, at any rate a man who's been thrown off his balance. He might have had a sudden shock."

"Take my brother, for instance. When he lost his job it upset him so much that he preferred to live in a tissue of lies rather than let his son. . . ."

No. Put into words it all sounded very clumsy.

"When a man suddenly loses everything he has in life. . . ."

"He doesn't necessarily go mad."

"I'm not saying he's actually mad. But imagine a person so full of resentment that he considers himself justified in revenging himself on his fellow-men. . . ."

"I don't need to point out to you, Inspector, that other murderers always kill in much the same way. This one has used a hammer, a knife, a spanner, and one woman he strangled. . . ."

"And he's never been seen, never left a clue. Wherever he lives in Paris, he must have walked miles and miles at night when there was no transport available, sometimes, when the alarm had been given, with the police on the look-out, questioning everybody they found in the streets. How is it he avoided them?"

He was certain he was on the right track. If only Saillard would hear him out. . . . He felt like going down on his knees and begging him to.

The Inspector sat on one of the camp beds. The cloakroom was small, and as Lecœur paced up and down in front of him, he could do no more than three paces each way.

"This morning, for instance, assuming he was with the boy, he went half-way across Paris, keeping out of sight of every police-station and every traffic point where there'd be a man on duty."

"You mean he knows the 15th and 16th *arrondissements* by heart?"

"And not those only. At least two others, the 12th and the 20th, as he showed on previous occasions. . . . He didn't choose his victims haphazard. He knew they lived alone and could be done in without any great risk."

What a nuisance! There was his brother, saying:

"Here are the sandwiches, André."

"Thanks. Go ahead, will you? . . . Don't wait for me. I'll be with you in a moment."

He bundled Olivier back into his corner and returned to the cloakroom. He didn't want him to hear. On the other hand, he didn't quite like to close the door, feeling himself to be a person of too little importance to shut himself in with the Inspector.

"If he's used a different weapon each time, it's because he knows it will puzzle us. He knows that murderers generally have their own way and stick to it."

"Lecœur. . . ."

The Inspector had risen to his feet and was staring at André with a far-away look, as though he was following a train of thought of his own.

"You mean that he's. . . ."

"That he's one of us—or has been. . . . I can't get the idea out of my head."

He lowered his voice.

"Someone who's been up against it in the same sort of way as my brother. A discharged fireman might take to arson. It's happened two or three times. . . . A policeman. . . ."

"But why should he steal?"

"Wasn't my brother in need of money? . . . This other chap may be like him in more ways than one. Supposing he, too, was a night worker and goes on pretending he's still in a job. That would explain why the crimes are committed so late. He has to be out all night. The first part of it is easy enough—the cafés and bars are open. . . . Afterwards he's all alone with himself."

As though to himself, Saillard muttered:

"There wouldn't be anybody in the personnel department on a day like this."

"Perhaps you could ring up the director at his home. He might remember."

Lecœur hadn't said all he had intended. There were lots of other points he had wanted to make, but when he was speaking they slipped out of his mind. Perhaps the whole thing was just a play of his fancy. Sometimes he thought so himself. At other moments all the pieces fitted together to make a cast-iron case.

"Hallo! Can I speak to Monsieur Guillaume, please? . . . He's not in? . . . Where could I reach him? . . . At his daughter's in Auteuil? . . . Have you got the number?"

There was another who'd had a family Christmas and who was probably still sitting over his coffee and liqueurs:

"Hallo! . . . Monsieur Guillaume? . . . Saillard speaking. I hope I'm not disturbing you too much. . . . Oh, you'd finished, had you? Good. . . . It's about the killer. . . . Yes, there's been another one. . . . No. Nothing definite. Only we have an idea that needs checking, and it's urgent. Don't be too surprised at my question. Has any member of the Paris police been sacked recently, say, two or three months ago? . . . I beg your pardon? . . . Not a single one this year. . . . I see. . . ."

Lecœur felt a sudden constriction round his heart as though overwhelmed by a catastrophe, and threw a pathetic despairing look at the wall-map. He had already given up and was surprised to hear his chief go on:

"As a matter of fact, it doesn't need to be as recent as all that. It would be someone who had worked in various parts of Paris, including the 15th and 16th. Probably also the 12th and 20th. Seems to have done a good deal of night work. Also to have been embittered by his dismissal. . . . What? . . ."

The way Saillard pronounced that last word gave Lecœur renewed hope. The others stared at the Inspector, wondering what he was after this time.

"Sergeant Loubet? . . . Yes. I remember the name, though I never actually came across him. Three years ago! . . . You wouldn't know where he lived, I suppose? . . . Somewhere near Les Halles? . . ."

Three years ago. No. It wouldn't do, and Lecœur's heart sank again. You could hardly expect a man to bottle up his resentments for three years and then suddenly start hitting back.

"Have you any idea what became of him? . . . No. Of course not. . . . And it's not a good day for finding out. . . ."

He hung up and looked thoughtfully at Lecœur. When he spoke, it was as though he was addressing an equal.

"Did you hear? . . . Sergeant Loubet. He was constantly getting into trouble and was shifted three or four times before being finally dismissed. Drink. That was his trouble. . . . He took his dismissal very hard. Guillaume can't say for certain what has become of him, but he thinks he joined a private detective agency. . . . If you like to have a try. . . ."

Lecœur set to work. He had little hope of succeeding, but it was better to do something than sit watching for the little lamps in the street plan. He began with the agencies of the most doubtful reputation, refusing to believe that a person such as Loubet would readily find a job with a reputable firm. Most of the offices were shut, and he had to ring up their proprietors at home. Often he heard children's voices.

"Don't know him. You'd better try Tisserand, in the Boulevard Saint-Martin. He's the one who takes all the riff-raff."

But Tisserand, a firm that specialised in shadowings, was no good either. For three-quarters of an hour Lecœur was at it, before finally hearing a wrathful voice answer:

"Don't speak to me of that good-for-nothing. It's a good two months or more since I chucked him out, in spite of his threatening to blackmail me. If he ever shows up at my office again, I'll throw him down the stairs."

"What sort of job did he have with you?"

"Night work. Watching blocks of flats."

André Lecœur's face had lit up with a sudden eagerness.

"Did he drink much?"

"He wasn't often sober. I don't know how he managed it, but he always knew where to get free drinks. Blackmail again, I suppose."

"Can you give me his address?"

"27 bis, Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule."

"Is he on the telephone?"

"Maybe. I don't know. I've never had the slightest desire to ring him up. Is that all? Can I go back to my game of bridge?"

He could hear the man muttering something to his friends as he replaced the receiver.

The Inspector had already snatched up the telephone directory and was looking for Loubet's number. He rang up himself. There was now a tacit understanding between him and Lecœur. They shared the same hope, the same trembling eagerness, while Olivier, realising that something important was going on, came and stood near them, looking first at one, then at the other.

Without being invited, André did something he wouldn't have dreamt of doing that morning. He picked up the second earphone to listen in. The bell rang in the flat in the Rue du Pas-de-la-Mule. It rang for a long time, as though the place was deserted, and his anxiety was becoming acute when at last it stopped and a voice answered.

Thank Heaven! It was a woman's voice, an elderly one.

"Is that you at last? Where are you?"

"Hallo! This isn't your husband here, Madame."

"Has he met with an accident?"

From the hopefulness of her tone it sounded as though she had long been expecting one and wouldn't be sorry when it happened.

"It is Madame Loubet I'm speaking to, isn't it?"

"Who else would it be?"

"Your husband's not at home?"

"First of all, who are you?"

"Inspector Saillard."

"What do you want him for?"

The Inspector put his hand over the mouthpiece to say to Lecœur:

"Get through to Janvier. Tell him to dash round there as quick as he can."

What with an incoming call, for a while there were three telephones going at once.

"Didn't your husband come home this morning?"

"You ought to know! I thought the police knew everything!"

"Does it often happen?"

"That's his business, isn't it?"

No doubt she hated her drunkard of a husband, but now that he was threatened she was ready to stand up for him.

"I suppose you know he no longer belongs to the Police Force."

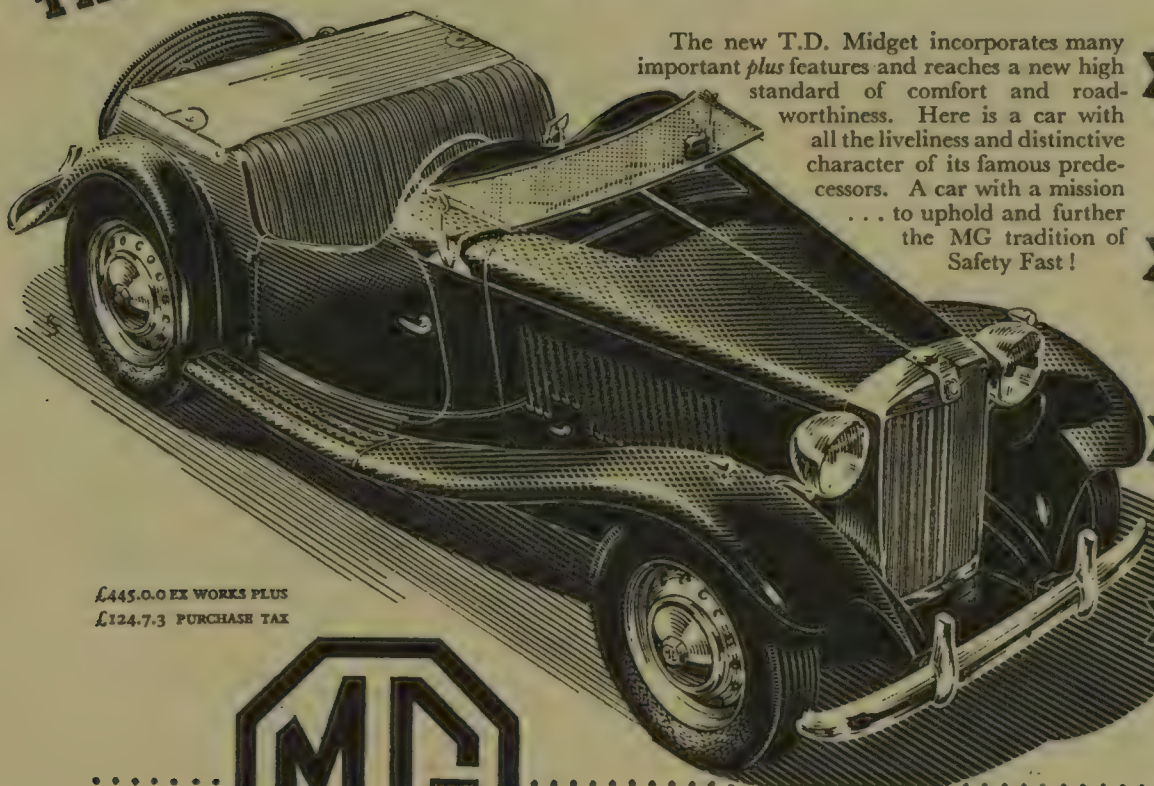
"Perhaps he found a cleaner job!"

"When did he stop working for the Agence Argus?"

[Continued overleaf]

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"I assure you, Madame, your husband was dismissed from the Agence Argus over two months ago."

"You're lying."

"Which means that for these last two months he's been going off to work every evening. . . ."

"Where else would he be going? To the Folies-Bergère?"

"Have you any idea why he hasn't come back to-day? He hasn't telephoned, has he?"

She must have been afraid of saying the wrong thing, for she rang off without another word.

When the Inspector put his receiver down he turned round to see Lecœur standing behind him, looking away. In a shaky voice, the latter said:

"Janvier's on his way now."

And with a finger he wiped away a little moisture from the corner of his eye.

V.

He was treated as an equal. He knew it wouldn't last, that to-morrow, sitting at his switchboard, he would be once more but a small cog in the huge wheel.

The others simply didn't count. Not even his brother, whose timid eyes darted from one to the other uncomprehendingly, wondering why, if his boy's life was in danger, they talked so much instead of doing something.

Twice he had to pluck at André's sleeve to get a word in edgeways.

"Let me go and look for him myself," he begged.

What could he do? The hunt had widened now. A description of ex-Sergeant Loubet had been passed to all police stations and patrols, as well as to the main-line stations.

It was no longer only a boy of ten who was being looked for, but also a man of fifty-eight, probably the worse for drink, dressed in a black overcoat with a velvet collar and an old grey felt hat, a man who knew his Paris like the palm of his hand, and who was acquainted with the police and all their methods.

Janvier had returned, looking fresher than the men there, in spite of his night's vigil. The truth was that anyone who came in from outside brought with him for a moment the freshness and brightness of the streets before being gradually enveloped by the dingy atmosphere of the room, where people seemed to be living in slow motion.

"She tried to slam the door in my face, but I'd taken the precaution of sticking my foot in. She doesn't know anything. She says he's been handing over his pay every month, just as before."

"That's why he had to steal. He didn't need big sums; in fact, he

wouldn't have known what to do with them. What's she like?"

"Small and dark, with piercing eyes. Her hair's dyed a sort of blue. She must have eczema or something of the sort, as she wears mittens."

"Did you get a photo of him?"

"There was one on the dining-room sideboard. She wouldn't give it me, so I just took it."

A heavy-built, florid man, with bulging eyes, who in his youth had probably been the village beau and had conserved an air of stupid arrogance. The photograph was some years old. No doubt he looked quite different now, a seedy man who had seen better days, with a shifty look in his eye in place of the arrogance.

"She didn't give you any idea where he was likely to be, did she?"

"As far as I could make out, except at night, when he was supposed to be at work, she kept him pretty well tied to her apron strings. I talked to the *concierge*, who told me he was scared stiff of his wife. Often she's seen him stagger home in the morning then suddenly pull himself together when he went upstairs. He goes out shopping with his wife; in fact, he never goes out alone in the daytime. If she goes out when he's in bed, she locks him in."

"What do you think, Lecœur?"

"I'm wondering whether my nephew and he aren't together."

"What do you mean?"

"They weren't together at the beginning, or Loubet would have stopped the boy giving the alarm. There must have been some distance between them. One was following the other."

"Which way round?"

It was awful being asked questions like that, as though he had suddenly become an oracle. He had never felt so humble in his life and was terrified of making a mistake.

"When the kid climbed up the drain-pipe he thought his father was guilty. Otherwise, why should he have sent him off to the Gare d'Austerlitz, where no doubt he intended to join him after getting rid of the sandwich tin."

"It looks like it."

"No, André. François could never have thought. . . ."

"Leave this alone. You don't understand. . . . At that time the crime had certainly been committed. François wouldn't have dreamt of burgling someone's flat for a tin box if it hadn't been that he'd seen the body."

"From his window," put in Janvier, "he could see most of the legs."

"What we don't know is whether the murderer was still there."

"I can't believe he was," said Saillard. "If he had been, he'd have kept out of sight, let the boy get into the room, and then done the same to him as he'd done to the old woman."

They had to take the facts one by one and try to visualise what had happened.

[Continued overleaf]



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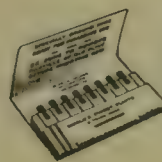


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"Look here, Olivier. . . . When you got home this morning was the light on?"

"Yes."

"In the boy's room?"

"Yes. It was the first thing I noticed. It gave me a shock. I thought perhaps he was ill."

"So the murderer very likely saw it and feared his crime had had a witness. He certainly wouldn't have expected anyone to climb up the drain-pipe. He must have rushed straight out of the house. . . ."

"And waited outside to see what would happen."

Guesswork! Yes. But that was all they could do. The important thing was to guess right. For that you had to put yourself in the other chap's place and think as he had thought. The rest was a matter of patrols, of the hundreds of policemen scattered all over Paris, and, lastly, of luck.

"Rather than go down the way he'd come the boy must have left the house by the entrance in the Rue Michat."

"Just a moment, Inspector. . . . By that time he probably knew that his father wasn't the murderer."

"Why?"

"Janvier said just now that Madame Fayet lost a lot of blood. If it had been his father, the blood would have had time to dry up more or less. It was some nine hours since François had seen him in the room. . . ."

Sometimes they seemed to be making headway, at others to be merely going round in circles. Sometimes the two men opened their mouths simultaneously, struck by the same idea.

"It was on leaving the house that he found out who had done it, whether it was Loubet or not. The latter wouldn't know whether the boy had seen him up in the room. François would have been scared and taken to his heels. . . ."

This time it was the boy's father who interrupted. In a dull voice he objected:

"No. Not if he knew there was a big reward offered. Not if he knew I'd lost my job. Not if he'd seen me go to the old woman to borrow some money."

The Inspector and André Lecœur exchanged glances. They had to admit Olivier was right, and it made them afraid.

No, it had to be pictured otherwise. A dark, deserted street in an outlying quarter of Paris two hours before dawn.

On the other hand, the ex-policeman, obsessed by his sense of grievance, who had just committed his ninth murder, to revenge himself on the society that had spurned him, and perhaps still more to prove to himself he was still a man by defying the whole police force—indeed, the whole world.

Was he drunk again? On a night like that, when the bars were open

long after their usual closing time, he had no doubt had more than ever. And in that dark, silent street, what did he see with his bulging drink-inflamed eyes? A young boy, the first person who had found him out, and who would now . . .

"I'd like to know whether he's got a gun on him," sighed the Inspector.

Janvier answered at once:

"I asked his wife. It seems he always carries one about, an automatic pistol, but it's not loaded."

"How can she know that?"

"Once or twice, when he was more than usually drunk, he rounded on her, threatening her with the gun. After that she got hold of his ammunition and locked it up, telling him an unloaded pistol was quite enough to frighten people without his having to fire it."

Had those two really stalked each other through the streets of Paris? A strange sort of duel in which the man had the strength and the boy the speed.

The boy may well have been scared, but the man stood for something precious enough to push fear into the background: a fortune and end of his father's worries and humiliations.

Having got so far, there wasn't a lot more to be said by the little group of people waiting in the *Préfecture de Police*. They sat gazing at the street plan with a picture in their minds of a boy following a man, the boy no doubt keeping his distance. Everyone else was sleeping. There was no one in the streets who could be a help to the one or a menace to the other. Had Loubet produced his gun in an attempt to frighten the boy away?

What should he do? Where should he go? He walked, first in this direction, then in that, but always keeping well clear of a blue lamp or of any other point where there might be a policeman on duty.

When people woke up and began coming out into the streets, what would the boy do then? Would he rush up to the first person he met and start screaming "Murder"?

"Yes. It was Loubet who walked in front," said Saillard slowly, after a long silence.

"And it was I," put in André Lecœur, "who told the boy all about the pillar telephone system."

The little crosses came to life. What had at first been mysterious was now almost simple. But it was tragic.

The child was risking his skin to save his father. Tears were slowly trickling down the latter's face. He made no attempt to hide them, he was too exhausted, utterly washed out.

He was in a strange place, surrounded by outlandish objects, and by people who talked to him as though he wasn't there, as though he was someone else. And his brother was among these people, a brother he

[Continued overleaf]



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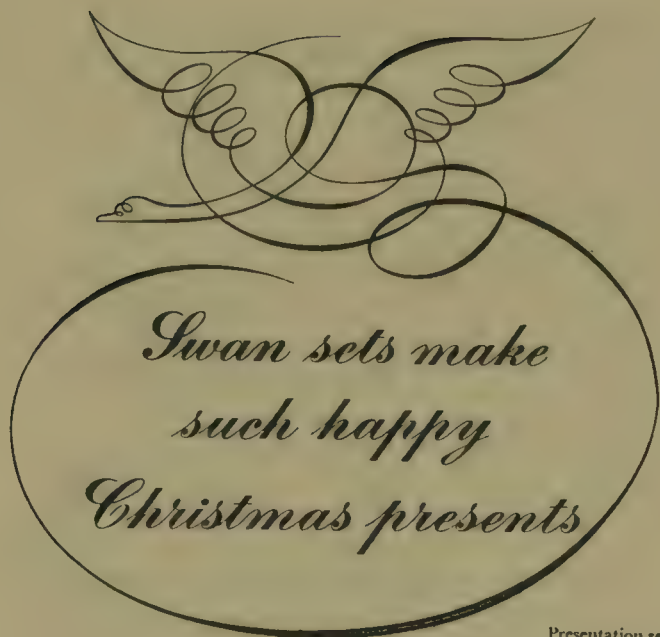
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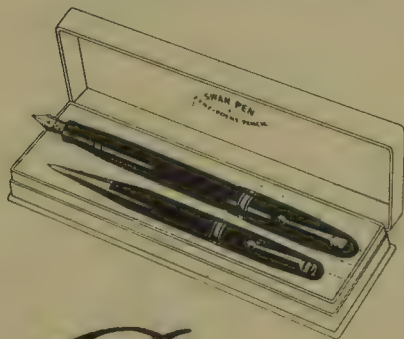
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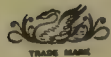


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could hardly recognise and whom he regarded with instinctive respect.

Even when they did speak, it wasn't necessary to say much. They understood each other. A word sufficed.

"Loubet couldn't go home, of course."

André Lecœur smiled suddenly as a thought struck him.

"It didn't occur to him that François hadn't a centime in his pocket. He could have escaped by diving into the Métro."

No. That wouldn't hold water. The boy had seen him and would give his description.

Place du Trocadéro, the Etoile. The time was passing. It was practically broad daylight. People were up and about. Why hadn't François called for help? Anyhow, with people in the streets it was no longer possible for Loubet to kill him.

The Inspector was deep in thought. After a moment he shook his head, as though to banish some hypothesis.

"For one reason or another," he murmured, "I think they're going about together now."

At the same moment a lamp lit up on the wall. As though he knew it would be for him, Lecœur answered in place of Bedeau.

"Yes. I thought as much. . . . Thanks."

He explained to the others:

"It's about the two oranges. They've found an Arab boy asleep in the third-class waiting-room at the Gare du Nord. He still had the oranges in his pockets. He'd run away from home because his father had beaten him."

"Do you think Bib's dead?"

Olivier Lecœur wrung his hands.

"If he was dead Loubet would have gone home, as he would no longer have anything to fear."

So the struggle was still going on somewhere in this now sunny Paris in which families were sauntering along the boulevards taking the air, with their children dressed up in their Sunday clothes.

It would be the fear of losing him in the crowd that had brought François close to his quarry. Why didn't he call for help? No doubt because Loubet had threatened him with his gun.

"One word from you, my lad, and I'll empty this into your guts. . . ."

So each was pursuing his own goal: for the one to shake off the boy somehow, for the other to watch for the moment when the murderer was off his guard and give the alarm before he had time to shoot.

It was a matter of life and death. To both of them.

"Loubet isn't likely to be in the centre of the town, where policemen are too plentiful for his liking, to say nothing of the fact that many of them know him by sight."

Their most likely direction from the Etoile was towards Montmartre,

not to the amusement quarter, but to the remoter and quieter parts, where many of the streets were more like those of a country town.

It was half-past two. Had they had anything to eat? Had Loubet, with his mind set on escape, been able to resist the temptation to drink?

"Monsieur le Commissaire. . . ."

André Lecœur couldn't speak with the assurance he would have liked. He couldn't get rid of the feeling that he was an upstart, if not a usurper.

"I know there are thousands of little bars in Paris. . . . But if we chose the more likely districts and put plenty of men on to the job. . . ."

Not only were all the men there roped in, but Saillard got through to the *Police Judiciaire*, where there were six men on duty, and set every one of them to work on six different telephone lines.

"Hallo! . . . Is that the Bar des Amis? . . . In the course of the day have you seen a middle-aged man accompanied by a boy of ten? The man's wearing a black overcoat and a. . . ."

Again Lecœur made little crosses, not in his notebook this time, but in the telephone directory. There were ten pages of bars, some of them with the weirdest of names. Some were shut. From others came the sound of music.

A plan of Paris was spread out on a table all ready and it was in a little alley of ill-repute behind the Place Clichy that the Inspector was able to make the first mark in red chalk.

"Yes, there was a man of that description here about twelve o'clock. He drank three glasses of Calvados and ordered a glass of white wine for the boy. The boy didn't want to drink at first, but he did in the end and he wolfed a couple of hard-boiled eggs. . . ."

By the way Olivier Lecœur's face lit up you might have thought he heard his boy's voice.

"You don't know which way they went?"

"Towards the Boulevard des Batignolles, I think. . . . The man looked as though he'd already had one or two before he came in."

Olivier would have liked to telephone too, but there wasn't a free line, and he went from one to the other with a frown on his face, trying to guess the answers that came through.

"Hallo! . . . Zanzi-Bar? . . . Have you at any time seen a. . . ."

It became a refrain. As soon as one man had finished, the same words, or practically the same, were repeated by his neighbour.

Rue Damrémont. Montmartre again, only further out this time. One-thirty. Loubet had broken a glass, his movements by this time being somewhat clumsy. The boy got up and made off in the direction of the lavatory, but when the man followed, he thought better of it and went back to his seat.

"Yes. The boy did look a bit frightened. . . . As for the man, he was laughing and smirking as though he was enjoying a huge joke."

(Continued overleaf)



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"Do you hear that, Olivier? Bib was still there at one-forty."

André Lecœur dared not say what was in his mind. The struggle was nearing its climax. Now that Loubet had really started drinking it was just a question of time. The only thing was: would the boy wait long enough?

Might he not make a premature move, thinking the man drunker than he really was? If he did that. . .

It was all very well for Madame Loubet to say the gun wasn't loaded. The butt of an automatic was quite hard enough to crack a boy's skull.

His eyes wandered to his brother, and he had a vision of what Olivier might well have come to if his asthma hadn't prevented him drinking.

"Hallo! . . . Yes. . . Where? . . . Boulevard Ney? . . ."

They had reached the outskirts of Paris. The ex-sergeant seemed still to have his wits about him. Little by little, in easy stages, he was leading the boy to one of those outlying districts where there were still empty building-sites and desolate spaces.

Three police cars were promptly switched to that neighbourhood, as well as every available *agent cycliste* within reach. Even Janvier dashed off, taking the Inspector's little car, and it was all they could do to prevent Olivier Lecœur running after him.

"I tell you, you'd much better stay here. He may easily go off on a false trail, and then you won't know anything."

Nobody had time for making coffee. The men of the second day-shift had now thoroughly warmed to the case. Everyone was strung up. Words came out jerkily, even snappily.

"Hallo! . . . Yes. . . Orient-Bar. . . What is it?"

It was André Lecœur who took the call. With the receiver to his ear he rose to his feet, making queer signs that brought the whole room to a hush.

"What? . . . Don't speak so close to the mouthpiece. . ."

In the silence the others could hear a high-pitched voice coming over the line.

"It's for the police. . . Tell the police I've got him. . . The killer. . . Hallo! . . . What? Is that Uncle André?"

The voice was lowered a tone to say shakily:

"I tell you I'll shoot. . . Uncle André. . ."

Lecœur hardly knew to whom he handed the receiver. He dashed out of the room and up the stairs, almost breaking down the door of the room from which the radio messages went out.

"Quick. . . All cars to the Orient-Bar, Porte Clignancourt. . ."

And without waiting to hear the message go out, he dashed back as fast as he'd come. At the door he stopped dead, struck by the calm that had suddenly descended on the room.

It was Saillard who held the receiver into which, in the thickest of

Parisian dialects, a voice was saying:

"It's all right. . . Don't worry. . . I gave the chap a crack on the head with a bottle. . . Laid him out properly. . . God knows what he wanted to do to the kid. . . What's that? . . . You want to speak to him? . . . Here, little one. . . Come here. . . And give me your pop-gun. . . I don't like those toys. . . Why! It isn't loaded! . . ."

Another voice. "Is that Uncle André?"

The Inspector looked round, and it was not to André, but to Olivier, to whom he handed the receiver.

"Uncle André. . . I got him. . . The killer. . . I. . ."

"Hallo! Bib! . . ."

"What?"

"Bib! It's me. . ."

"Whatever are you doing there, Dad?"

"Nothing. . . Waiting to hear from you. . . It's been. . ."

"You can't think how bucked I am. . . Wait a moment. . . Here's the police. They want to speak to me. . ."

Confused sounds. Voices, the shuffling of feet, the clink of glasses. Olivier Lecœur listened, standing there awkwardly, gazing at the wall-map which he did not see, his thoughts far away at the northern extremity of Paris, in a wide, windswept boulevard.

"They're taking me with them. . ."

Another voice..

"Is that you, Chief? . . . Janvier here. . ."

One might have thought it was Olivier Lecœur who had been knocked on the head with a bottle by the way he held the receiver out, staring blankly in front of him.

"He's out, right out, Chief. They're lugging him away now. . . When the boy heard the telephone ringing he decided it was his chance. He grabbed Loubet's gun from his pocket and made a dash for the 'phone. . . The proprietor here's a pretty tough nut. . . If it hadn't been for him. . ."

A little lamp lit up in the plan of Paris.

"Hallo! . . . Your car's gone out? . . ."

"Someone's smashed the glass of the pillar telephone in the Place Clignancourt. . . Says there's a row going on in a bar. . . I'll ring up again when we know what's going on. . ."

It wouldn't be necessary.

Nor was it necessary for André Lecœur to put a cross in his notebook.

Bursting with pride, the boy for whom two wireless-sets were waiting glided along the Boulevard Barbès in a police-car.

THE END.

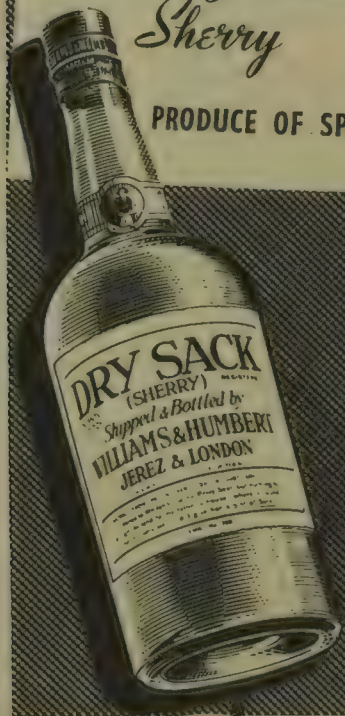
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